

Searching for a “pedagogy of hope”: teacher education and the social sciences

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I analyse module outlines within a particular school of social sciences located in a faculty of education, and uncover the evolving systems of teaching social sciences in a teacher education curriculum. The data are analysed through two theoretical lenses: firstly, through the lense of models of teacher education and professional development, and secondly, through the lense of multicultural and multi-disciplinary studies. The analysis reveals that a new language around social sciences is still in the early stages of development, drawing its main referencing from the official policy of the National Curriculum Statement. Unable to develop an independent new language, the social sciences in teacher education tend to capitulate to external dominant forces. There is little evidence of engaging with a critical discourse around the potential of teacher education, resulting in a perpetuation of an applied science notion of professional growth. The juxtaposing of existing disciplinary boundaries constitutes the character of the delivery of the social sciences. I point to a “pedagogy of hope” which focuses on the future rather than on the present status of marginalisation of the social sciences in a teacher education curriculum. The paper offers a way to develop a “Creole”, a language and a discourse around the social sciences in general, for teacher education in particular.

Keywords: multi-cultural education; multi-disciplinarity; social sciences; sociolinguistics; teacher education curriculum; teacher professional development

The birth and death of languages is a well-researched phenomenon in the field of sociolinguistics (Batibo, 2005; Crystal, 2000; Pride & Holmes, 1972). Social, political, cultural and economic factors coincide and collide as certain languages develop ascendancy and others become marginalised. In this paper I attempt to explore the ways in which teacher educators in the social sciences engage with developing a (new) language to talk about the courses they offer in an undergraduate initial teacher education curriculum. The focus is on how this language relates to the existing discourses which surround teacher education reform in South Africa. Competing languages interact with each other in the formation of the new language of teacher education and the social sciences. The language that teacher educators use to describe their curriculum reflects these competing influences in regard to the identity of the social sciences in the context of teacher education pedagogy. I aim to record this emergent language from a sampled teacher education institution case study, namely, the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), Faculty of Education, and to comment on the prospective agenda for teacher education and the social sciences. Languages, prime carriers of cultural history and heritage, are never born in a neutral vacuum, absent from the issues of conquest. In this paper therefore I record the self-declared areas of focus of the social sciences teacher education curriculum at UKZN, and embed, perhaps unconsciously, elements of the contested and ‘conquered’ nature of curriculum development in teacher education.

The lens of teacher education

The first lens through which to analyse the discourse of social sciences teacher education draws from conceptual models of teacher education. It is acknowledged that the practice of teacher education might reflect a permutation of models: such variance occurs both across and within different learning sites, specialisations and pedagogies of initial teacher education programmes. Hence, the models are offered as tools for thinking about the phenomenon of how professional learning and teacher development occur within the teacher education curriculum. I choose to reflect on four broad models: namely, the **master–apprenticeship** model, the **applied-science** model, the **reflective-**

practitioner model, and the socially **critical-reflective-practice** model (see Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (MCTE), 2005 for a detailed elaboration of the strengths and limitations, divergences and overlaps of such conceptual modelling of teacher education).

The first model, the **master-apprenticeship** model, suggests that a novice teacher learns best through behavioural modelling, through imitating an expert teacher. The process of acquiring teacher competence would be through the master making overt (through demonstration or explanation, usually oral), the procedures for executing targeted practice. The apprentice mimics these procedures in simulated or real future contexts.

The dominant model of teacher education (more correctly “teacher training”) in South Africa prior to the demise of apartheid, was the **applied-science** model. This model is also dominant in other professions, where it is believed that novice practitioners must first learn the theoretical basis of the discipline, and then seek contexts within which they will enact and apply the theory in practice. The model presumes that knowledge of the discipline base will provide the foundation for practice (Lewin & Stuart, 2003).

The **reflective-practitioner** model of teacher education, on the other hand, attempts to draw resources from within the teachers themselves. True to its interpretivist and constructivist roots, the belief within this model is that the novice practitioners can expose the ingredients for alternate improved practice through personal self-reflection. It seems to me that teacher education is thus seen as an extension of self-development, as the novices see themselves and their classroom practices through deliberate planning, acting, observation and reflection cycles. The tradition of “action research” in which teachers explore cycles of new forms of action characterises this model (Eggleston, 1979; Elliot, 1985).

Finally, the **critical-reflective-practice** model of teacher development recognises that teaching, schooling and education are implicated in establishing and maintaining particular notions of power and hierarchy within society in general through the forms of practice of schooling. The model seeks to develop teachers to understand the power-laden-ness of their actions and the nature of the quality of social justice meted out within school and classroom contexts. Critical reflective practitioners are thus expected to seek better forms of social justice through their actions and practice in their specific contexts (Lewin, Samuel & Sayed, 2003).

Any curriculum of teacher education, including that of social sciences, could be subjected to an analysis using these models or permutations of the models. Most institutions reflect divergences between the *official declared* model of teacher education (as contained in the faculty’s handbooks), the academic staff’s *espoused*, declared version (as revealed perhaps in interviews), and the *experienced* curriculum (as students report its enactment). In this paper I choose to focus largely on the *officially declared* curriculum, i.e. what module designers declare in writing publicly as their espoused structure, outcomes, elements and assessment within their module or course outlines.

Understanding disciplinarity

A second lens to be used in this paper focuses notions of disciplinarity. Recently published literature in education seems preoccupied with the ways to deal with a wide spectrum of clashes across cultural, racial, national and religious boundaries as the world increasingly evolves into a global village. New forms of mobility into the world of others, more specifically, enable many people to relatively easily cross boundaries, something denied to previous generations. Through technology or even physical transportation, the new generation of learners in the schooling and education system is able to enter into the spaces and lives of others. This trend has sparked a growing literature which attempts to explore notions of ‘multicultural education’ (Sleeter, 1995; 1996). In this paper, I will point only to the following forms of “border crossings”: **juxta-culturalism**, **fusion**, **trans-disciplinarity** and **critical, restorative multiplicity**. I regard these as a possible range on the continuum of possible conceptions of ‘multi-cultural’ or ‘multi-disciplinary’ education.

Juxta-culturalism was created in South Africa by the apartheid government, as it believed in the need to promote cultures alongside each other as separate, contained entities. In this context, the different cultural worldviews of different groups of people evolved. In South Africa, this form of cultural education was organised alongside the marker of racial categorisation, based on a racialised

interpretation of hierarchies across different peoples. Good education was interpreted to promote these separate worlds, which could exist alongside each other. Of course, other forms of apartheid found within many countries beyond South Africa, could be organised along class lines: where members of society with different role functions in relation to keeping the economy productive, were afforded different cultural notions of what education entailed. Each separate group was provided with interpretations of education that operated in juxtaposition to each other. Some even tried to argue for a 'separate-but-equal' philosophy to justify the borders between different education models for different groups (of course, these juxtapositions are also not devoid of notions of power). Such juxtaposition could take the form of separate and/or interactive dialogue, as different 'cultural systems' co-existed.

Within a "**fusion**" ethos, the campaign of educationalists is seen to seek the blending of different forms to create a new form, drawing on both cultural worlds. This fusion may be argued to have quantitative or qualitative elements from both the intersecting cultures. Fusion has the possibility of producing a new culture if it is, itself, taken to be an accepted form of intercultural life. It draws from source cultures and aims to develop a new target culture, and contains elements of both cultures. Pavis (1992), for example, uses the image of an hourglass which funnels through a narrow aperture, the transition to the new order. Such transitions are usually abrasive, painful and demanding as experiences of the losses of the "source culture" come to be reported. As the new "target culture" (in the lower half of the hourglass) is formed, it resists essentialising and begins another cycle of reformation in new attempts at inversion, to begin another cycle of reformulation (see Samuel, 2001). Cultural formation is thus an ongoing re-fusion.

Within the terrain of **transdisciplinarity**, the attempt is to pay attention to how one disciplinary base (culture) transports itself into another discipline (culture). These two disciplines or cultural worlds may not necessarily have anything in common, but they are deliberately brought to bear on each other.

Within a **critical restorative multiplicity**, the intention of intercultural communication is to foreground notions of seeking better forms of social justice in the interactive platforms of the two intersecting cultures (disciplines). The emphasis in this form of multiculturalism or multi-disciplinarity, is that it has a healing dimension, which actively seeks ways of addressing iniquitous power. It could be regarded as a "pedagogy of forgiveness" (Waghid, 2005; 2006; 2007), a "pedagogy of possibilities" (Volmink, 2008) or a "pedagogy of hope" (Vithal, 2008). These models of pedagogy clearly locate themselves within a critical and post-modern discourse. Vithal (2008) argues that a "pedagogy of hope" includes a recognition of the tensions and conflicts which are embedded in any teaching and learning situation. By surfacing these tensions, a potential for new forms of dialogue are created in complementarity with the conflicts. Bringing together the conflicts and dialogue allows for the possibility of reaching new forms of social justice, of being and of new hope.

The purposes of this exploration are to question what notions of multiculturalism/multidisciplinarity exist within the social sciences discourse of teacher education (Figure 1).

Data production and research context

In this paper I draw on the discourse around social sciences in teacher education from only one source of data in one context. This is thus a case study of emerging attempts to define a new language within the teaching of the social sciences. The data were collected as a routine quality assurance data gathering experience, which requires staff members in a teacher education programme to submit to the discipline co-ordinator, head of school, qualification co-ordinator and deputy dean, the specific *course/module outlines* which inform the delivery of their modules in an initial professional teacher education (IPET) teaching programme. The module outlines are presented to IPET students at the commencement of the module to frame the terms of reference for the delivery and assessment of the module, and constitute a public document of the faculty. The data were gathered from one school in the UKZN, namely, the School of Social Sciences Education (SSE), in 2008 and I hereby acknowledge the contribution made by the authors of the module outlines as co-contributors to this paper via the data they made available.

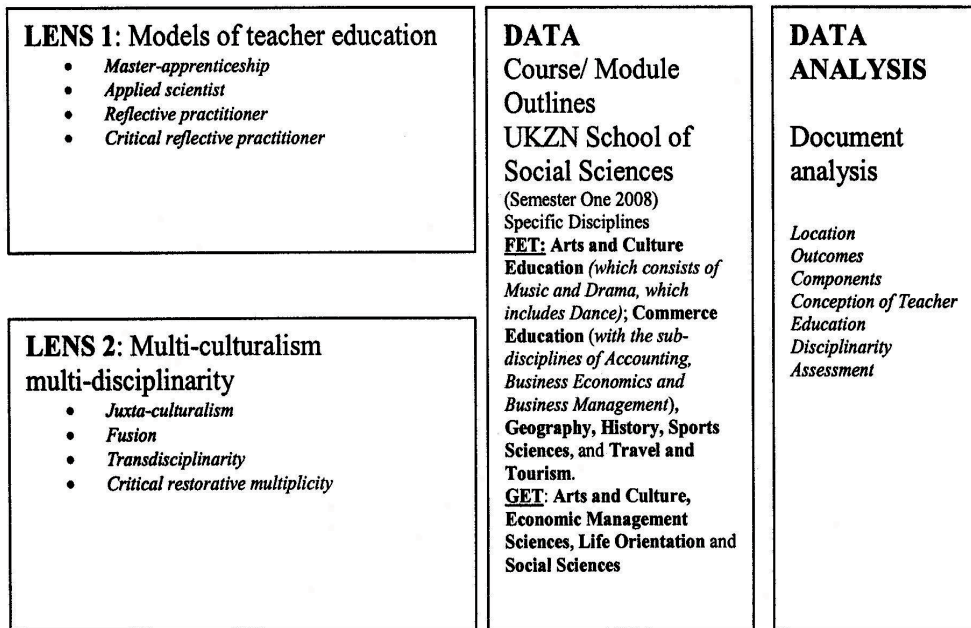


Figure 1. Schematic representation of the research design

It is recognised that these data represent a limited set of what may be regarded as the social sciences. It is also recognised that the organisation of what constitutes the social sciences reflects the historical setting up of this faculty into a particular combination of disciplines, after the merger of a former college of education and two universities, including staff. This merger suggests that interpretations of social sciences education may be symptomatic of historical *governance* issues of the newly formed institution, rather than *disciplinary considerations* about the identity of the social sciences. Moreover, these understandings of social sciences might also be merely pragmatic *management clusters* of staff, prepared to work alongside each other and reflect the choices of staff who rallied to support each other as the pangs experienced in a merged institution influenced their everyday practice. It is, however, worth noting that some schools, such as the School of Social Sciences, consists predominantly of ex-college staff, and others, for example, the School of Education and Development (SED), is constituted predominantly by former university staff. Presently, there is only one recently appointed professor in the School of Social Sciences, whilst professors are distributed across other schools within the faculty. This raises an important question: how does this affect the ability to profess “social sciences” within teacher education?

The following self-named discipline clusters constitute the School of Social Sciences: **Arts and Culture Education** (which consists only of the sub-disciplines of Music, and Drama, which includes Dance); **Commerce Education** (with the sub-disciplines of Accounting, Business Economics and Business Management), **Geography, History, Sports Sciences** and **Travel and Tourism**. Whilst the above descriptions of the disciplines derive from the course outlines of the Further Education and Training (FET) school phase specialisations of the Bachelor of Education (BEd) programme, a further demarcation of self-named disciplines for the General Education and Training (GET) school phases is described as follows: **Arts and Culture, Economic and Management Sciences, Life Orientation and Social Sciences**. An immediate first analysis indicates that teacher education disciplines largely mirror and draw their identity and language labelling from the national school curriculum nomenclature, where the learning areas of the GET and the teaching subjects of the FET have come to be defined as “the disciplines” within teacher education. Of course, it is important to ask whose language/labelling dominates in this case, or whether the proponents of the

language usage signal anything symbolically significant. A clear alignment in the case of Arts and Culture is evident, despite its incomplete mirroring of the school-type subjects in the school FET curriculum. Commerce Education has chosen its own labelling outside the school FET labels. Should the teacher education curriculum mirror school curriculum directly? Is this alignment desirable? If this is so, why? What likely consequences will this have for the development of the discourse of the social sciences in teacher education? Whose identity/ what power forces are framing what goes on within the teacher education curriculum definitions? Where does the power basis for reform reside in terms of the social sciences disciplines? Who has the authority to define the “social sciences”? Whence does this authority emanate? Who are the authors of such authority or authoritative definitions? From where do such authors gain their rationale for ascendancy?

It should be noted that the same lecturers often teach across the GET and FET phases in the teacher education curriculum at UKZN, yet they choose to label their offerings differently. Is it important that Sports Science chose to retain its disciplinary label, despite such a ‘teaching subject’ not being a separate disciplinary/teaching subject of the FET school curriculum? It is noted that sports, as a major cultural (albeit claimed ‘extra-curricular’) activity of predominantly former white schools, finds a mirror in the teacher education curriculum. A cultural activity, like Choral Music, however, a similar ‘extracurricular activity’ of predominately former black schools, does not have a similar marked representation as a ‘separate discipline’ of the teacher education curriculum. It may be argued that our language only reflects existing power relations still at play between white and black schools, and our teacher education curriculum labels for social sciences merely reinforce, and do not challenge, these differentials.

A close examination of the module outlines reveal that the discipline co-ordinators (DCs) usually teach the final-year students, whilst more junior/newly-appointed/part-time staff teach the ‘lower’ first, second and third years in the BEd IPET programme. Within the former University of Natal, one of the merging partners of the new UKZN, discipline authority was vested in heads of department, who were organised along disciplinary lines. The former University of Durban-Westville, by contrast, was organised around programmatic lines, and hence disciplinary clusters were relatively loose formations. Budgetary constraints to recognise these DC-roles have prevented remuneration, and a model of programme, rather than discipline, positions has been created. It appears that seniority of teaching responsibilities has replaced remuneration status. Besides this being an interesting example of how former hierarchical power relations between merging partners continue to play themselves out in a merged institution, this lack of formal remuneration status of DCs, of course, has implications for the development of the identity of the discipline. Many of the DCs are the more senior staff members with doctorates, and are expected to lead theoretical and academic research. In the SSE however, only one former university staff member is a DC. This identity of not being a college of education, but instead a university faculty of education, is an emerging one within the SSE, as it shifts to balance teaching, research and community engagement responsibilities. The quality of disciplinary identity in the social sciences must be influenced by this specific contextual landscape.

It should also be noted that the particular SSE has, in its most recent appointment, employed a new head of school from outside the SSE. His roots in social justice, drama education and gender education debates also bear influence. This has sparked significant curriculum reform and transformation debates within the SSE, as issues of multi-disciplinarity and the social sciences’ theoretical basis are now being explored. The module/course outlines that staff constructed during the first semester of 2008 therefore reflect how these debates and the context have engendered a new discourse amongst the teacher educators. This emerging identity is reflected in the fact that at least three SSE staff members are now pursuing their doctoral studies, something that did not previously characterise ‘college’ staff.

The analysis of the module outlines below will reveal whether a new language has emerged as the worlds of the former college of education (the academic staff) and university (discipline co-ordinators and head of school) intertwine. This analysis might also be about the hierarchies between these levels, as much as it is about emerging social sciences discourses.

The course outlines were interpreted as data, and were subjected to a document analysis in

terms of the following issues: the *location* of the module within the IPET curriculum (the BEd is a four-year degree; the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) is a one-year qualification); the definition of *outcomes* for the module; the declared *components* of the module; the conception of *teacher education* it promotes; the notion of *disciplinarity*; and the modes of *assessment*. These issues were regarded as proxy of the ability to language about the specific discipline within the social sciences. As such, this then could be regarded as an empirical analysis of the curriculum of the social sciences within teacher education. The intention is to draw attention to the notions of disciplinarity, with the view to developing theoretical possibilities for new ways of thinking and talking about social sciences in teacher education, i.e. a socially critical “pedagogy of hope”.

Data analysis

The data constituted approximately 60 modules taught in either the BEd or PGCE in the first semester of 2008. Whilst the BEd modules span 16 credits in only one semester of approximately 16 weeks, the PGCE 16 credit module is offered interspersed across the 32-week academic year, punctuated by two school-based placements during the Professional Practicum period. The BEd programme consists of separate “content” and “methodology” modules: the “content/discipline” modules focus exclusively on the knowledge base of the discipline, disconnected from any pedagogical referencing. The “methodology” modules constitute a direct reference to the teaching of the disciplines in the school curriculum. The PGCE programme consists of only methodology-focused modules related to the disciplines, since it is presumed that the disciplinary content knowledge base has been already developed at undergraduate degree level. The BEd students usually commence with a methodology module simultaneously with content modules in their second year of study after a generic foundational year. Both the content and methodology modules of the BEd, however, precede the school-based Teaching Practice component. The equivalent placement of PGCE students is referred to, not as practice, but School Experience.

The nomenclature to refer to the specific modules signals the notion of its conceptual identity in the minds of the programme designers. The *lingua franca* for the BEd modules, which deal with the development of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) (Shulman, 2004) (the teaching of a discipline within a specific classroom context), makes reference to different aspects of this phenomenon: reference to practical *strategies* for executing the discipline, namely “Methods”/“Methodology” (e.g. “Travel & Tourism Methods 1”) or a reference to the *target audience* of the discipline (e.g. “Geography for Educators”). By contrast, the PGCE modules refer to the *purpose* of the module, e.g. “Sports Science Teaching” modules. It should be noted that the *lingua franca* often distances itself from the official (legal) labelling set out in the official university/faculty handbooks/calendar. Perhaps this points to the perceived distance between the official writers of the module in the faculty handbooks and the designers of the modules who teach the module.

The sequencing of these modules also signals the conception within the BEd that teacher education is to follow an applied science notion, i.e. learn the “theory” first (include something about the practical execution of the theory), then apply it to practice. Zeichner (1983) calls this a “front-loaded” curriculum, where lecturers usually expect to see what they have taught in their lecture halls being replicated in practice in the school classrooms. The label “School Experience” for the PGCE, suggests a model which values the interaction between the world of academic knowledge (university campus-based) and the world of practical experience (school-based). When viewing the overall delivery roll-out of the BEd over a four-year period, however, the same interactive quality between academic and experiential knowledge might be said to characterise the BEd programme as well. The description above is not unique to social sciences, since it informs the design of the PGCE and BEd curriculum and the timetable offering as a whole.

Whilst this integration across the entire curriculum might constitute the students’ experienced curriculum, the module course outlines do not hint at any form of integration across the different modules offered in the discipline. There appears to be very little dialogue across the different levels taught in the different modules, and across the content and method modules. There does not, furthermore, appear to be a strong sense of a developmental sequencing in most of the disciplines, where each of the sub-disciplines are often simply located in separate entities across different modules, or

within clearly bounded time slots within the delivery of the module. Exceptions are noted in the teaching of History, Business Economics and Accounting. Within the social sciences of the GET curriculum, however, the boundaries between History and Geography are kept in juxtaposition, perhaps reflecting the separate fields of expertise of the lecturers who teach the module. There is, however, an attempt to cohere a course/module outline with common outcomes and purposes. Within Life Orientation, the “separate” sub-disciplines of Sports Science (physical), Religious Education (moral/social), Educational Psychology (personal/psychological), do not appear to have found a co-existence. This is despite the attempts in Life Orientation Learning Area studies to construct semblance of the integration and “wholeness” as suggested by its reference to the intersection required in the Introduction to the Revised National Curriculum Statement.

In the BEd content modules generally, the disciplines are reflected in a bland description and listing of the “topics to be covered”, often described as such. This suggests that disciplinary knowledge is a fixed body of knowledge which has clearly defined boundaries. The listing of topics suggests a lack of engagement with the contested nature of the knowledge within the discipline. For example, the following list appears in one module: “history, anatomy, kinesiology, water activities and creative gymnastics”. Since the research study did not probe classroom pedagogy, I am unable to comment on whether these “topics” are dealt with critically or engaged with to reflect an interconnected analysis of the discipline of Sports Science. By contrast, other listings of some BEd content modules grapple with the relationship between the knowledge of the disciplines and society, e.g. the learning outcomes specified for “Business Management 210” are stated as follows: “students should be able to understand the role of business organisations in society and discuss critically the interaction between society and the organisations as a social process”. Further modules seek innovative and creative labelling of the modules, perhaps to attract students to the discipline of History, or more importantly, to mark the contested nature of disciplinary knowledge, e.g. the module “Teaching War”, an interpretation of the official label “History Education 410”, sets out in its detailed approximately 20-page course outline an interest in exploring the purposes of war for “conquest, insurgency or liberation”. The module designer hereby actively recruits students into a worldview of a contested multidisciplinary. It expressly also states its base in a philosophy of history, declaring its argument that the student outcomes for this module are to understand the teaching of History in schools and to “be guided towards sound historical knowledge, values and skills pertaining to war and conflict”. It expects students to “demonstrate an understanding of concepts such as cause and effect, time, chronology, objectivity, subjectivity, bias and prejudice”. It is not surprising that a large body of reading references, website addresses, and journal articles permeate these latter modules.

The identity of many of the social sciences modules seems to reflect a painful abrasive grinding, especially since the different sub-disciplines attempt to find themselves in new re-definitions. The Arts and Culture Education “discipline”, for example, grapples with what constitutes the sub-disciplines: performing and visual arts; music, art, drama, dance, visual arts; and what constitutes the relationship between arts and culture. This grappling is reflected in the absence of many of the constitutive sub-disciplines of “Arts and Culture Education” as offered in the SSE. It is recognised that the “Arts and Culture person in the faculty” has only recently (2008) relocated to be repositioned in the School of Social Sciences Education, rather than within the School of Languages, Literacies and Media Education, which could also, theoretically, equally have been a home-base. This again raises the question: what does not constitute a “social science”? Skovsmose (2008) argues that all forms of knowledge are social constructions, embedding and implicated in the “wonders and horrors of a social, cultural and political endeavour”. Arguably then, it is not surprising to see Languages not regarded as a social science, but having a demarcated separate existence with the same status as an equivalent, separate School of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education within the Faculty of Education. It could, perhaps, be argued that “Languages” constitute a more powerfully defined social science discipline warranting elevated separation, relegating the other “social sciences” to the periphery.

It is interesting to note, furthermore, that in the present module offerings of the Arts and Culture UKZN IPET curriculum, Music (an FET subject) is not offered at BEd level, and Visual

Arts does not feature explicitly. This is ironic in a faculty which boasts a very productive “Centre for Visual Methodologies for Social Change” (Centre) located alongside the School of Languages, Literacies and Media Education. The module outlines of offering in the first semester in 2008 of the SSE, make no reference to dialogue with the Centre and its influence within the IPET curriculum. This location of the Centre might have more to do with funding matters, than any disciplinary argument. This suggests that disciplinary boundaries across schools should be more permeable, to allow better dialogue, fusion and re-fusion.

The presumed pedagogical strategy of most modules takes the form of lectures presented on specific topics. The lack of reference to purpose or outcomes for each of the separate sections is notable. Also noted is an absence of detailed description of the pedagogical strategy to be employed in delivering the module sub-sections. There is scant mention of project work as a pedagogical strategy in most modules. Project work is usually only reflected as a grouping strategy to manage assessment tasks. The use of excursions, field trips or modelling of creative pedagogies to engage with learning the discipline does not feature in the content modules. This tendency, it seems to me, perpetuates a model indicating that learning is about listening to an expert (or perhaps a group of experts). In one particular case, for example, 50% of the assessment tasks for a PCK module rely on student presentations. This suggests that the module designer’s responsibility is that of spectator and assessor of the students’ activity: a flawed interpretation of a learner-centred curriculum. Perhaps designers of content modules relegate teaching pedagogical strategies to the so-called PCK modules/methodology modules (as an add-on). This further reinforces an applied-science notion of teacher education. It should be noted that only exit-level modules are externally examined, i.e. reviewed by an expert outside the university. One wonders whether the more elaborate exit-level modules are a factor of this external review process. Perhaps module designers need to conceptualise the teaching of the discipline as culminating in these target exit programme outcome levels.

When examining the module outlines with respect to the quality of disciplinary depth of the undergraduate modules, especially in non-exit level modules, clear concerns arise. Are these modules equivalent to undergraduate level modules in feeder faculties? Is the disciplinary content of the undergraduate modules being directed by the content of the SSE (at a National Qualifications Framework level, below that of post-secondary school education)? The language of many of these non-exit level modules suggests that the purpose is to align them with the content of the phase specialisation within which the targeted teacher will prospectively teach. The depth of the nature of the discipline itself within the conception of a higher education module is somewhat underdeveloped. The clear marking of the identity of the teacher education curriculum of these social sciences modules seems to be driven by the National Curriculum Statement. National Curriculum Statement becomes the powerful dominating technology of undiscerning teacher education social sciences module designers. Of course, the argument might be made that in the absence of a language to talk about the interconnectedness of the disciplines at teacher education level, the source of inspiration is derived from the “language from outside”. This could be regarded as a “dumbing down” of the teacher education curriculum, but, as some provincial departments of education like to argue, presents “a more relevant teacher education curriculum, serving the needs of the school curriculum”. Some argue that this “dumbing-down” is a response to the poor quality of matriculation entry requirements (across all race groups), which characterised earlier admissions into teacher education programmes. It needs to be seen whether a boosting of the standards and curriculum requirements will follow the notable, improved intake of matriculants with significantly higher achievement into the BEd undergraduate curriculum since 2006. Will the opposite of a “building-up” of module depth be guaranteed?

This also brings into question whether school and university curriculum should be loosely or tightly aligned. Put differently, should teacher education curriculum be the dominant partner that defines the nature of the emerging social sciences discipline, encompassing a broader, holistic development of prospective teachers, able to critically engage with any school curriculum policy, confident in theorising and choosing forms of practice which enable them to endure the teaching profession within the ambit of many potentially different masters, managers or policy makers? Should teacher education reflect a tight alignment between the school curriculum and the teacher

education curriculum, a pragmatic, utilitarian preoccupation with being 'relevant' to the demands of the present organs of power? This latter interpretation surely casts teachers as servants of policy rather than as professionals who inspire quality teaching and learning. The former casts teachers as ongoing professionals, organising systematic learning and drawing from their deep knowledge of and commitment to their discipline.

One therefore needs to ask whether the social sciences teacher educators are preparing future teachers as sufficient masters of their discipline. The quality of the assessment tasks, as indicated in the module outlines, seems to suggest that disciplinary boundary crossing is largely not emphasised. The majority, especially of the content modules, reflect a staid conception of disciplines in their historical entities. Maybe this is a direct, slavish interpretation of the module descriptions, which feature in the official template descriptions, and which novice module designers are hesitant to override. More junior staff members or less experienced lecturers are likely to follow more prescriptively, rather than innovatively, the potential and possibility for module design, including assessment. This suggests a more assertive responsibility for senior staff and DCs to induct junior and new staff into the creative establishment of the discipline through reconfiguration and redefinition. Another argument is that newly appointed staff ought to have cutting edge conceptions of the boundary blurring of disciplines to be able to direct new ways of thinking in the disciplines, and this should be brought forward into the usual curriculum reform processes which operate in designing modules for the teacher education curriculum. When curriculum module designers are confident of the breadth and depth of their knowledge of their disciplines, and their interconnectedness with other disciplines, they are more likely to engage in confident boundary crossing. This confidence regarding boundary crossing seems to characterise staff who hold advanced degrees, such as a masters or a doctorate. Such is the advantage of senior studies and advanced research. When resources and governance arrangement support, boundary crossing, as well as qualitative and critical disciplinary emerges.

Concluding thoughts

It is easy to interpret the above critique of the teaching of social sciences within the teacher education curriculum at UKZN as not offering a fundamental reconfiguring of the constituting disciplines. The picture is, however, more nuanced, as different disciplines within the target school reflect different levels of interest, commitment and the competence to make a change. There are those who interpret the development of module outlines as yet another form of the managerialism that characterises university education; hence, the module outlines reflect a "strategic compliance" (Mattson & Harley, 2003) with policy expectations in the faculty. There are, of course, some module outlines which simply reflect no more than the "official" descriptions in the university calendar/handbook. This leads one, perhaps erroneously, to conclude that the module designers have not grappled with the dominant discipline boundary blurring literature. Those teacher educators who choose to be directed from outside of the university, and see themselves as dictated to by school policy reform, are part of the legacy of those who are still victims of a mentality that framed teacher education institutions as extensions of the Department of Education. We have not yet found a completely new language defined by teacher educators themselves. The new language of the social sciences that is emerging is a language framed by the powerful school policy. Up to now, it has only evolved into a *pidgin*, a way of talking across two systems of school education and teacher education. It has not yet developed its own dictionary of new terminology, of new definitions. Instead, it is still being framed by the powerful technology of the official school curriculum. The technology of the official GET and FET school curriculum of the Department of Education is framing a powerful 'Creole', (over)defining the potential of only certain forms of knowledge, certain framings of disciplinary connections. Mathematics, Science and Technology have become the new mantras of the new discourse. Language education has gained a place within the laager of the powerful, but student teachers of the social sciences (read: Life Orientation, Commerce Education, Travel and Tourism, Arts and Culture Education, History and Geography) are not offered any prestigious space within the enacted curriculum. For example, the national Funza Lushaka bursary scheme, promoting particular targeted areas of prospective teacher education students, does not select the social scien-

ces as a category for investment in preparation for the new school curriculum. Arguably, this is because there is a claimed over-supply of teachers in the social sciences. The consequence in the long term is that it will weaken the valuing of social sciences, as faculties of education choose to invest in the strong and powerful mathematics and science disciplines.

Alternately, it might be argued that teacher education module designers can learn from the language from outside. The changed school curriculum is the product of much deliberation and consultation, reflecting a wide consensus of newly aligned multi-disciplinary interests. The social sciences of the school curriculum also now reflect a polyglot of multiple disciplines tending towards promoting, in theory, a *fusion* of disciplines, but often relegated to exist in practice as *trans-disciplinary* fields alongside each other (akin to a forced, arranged marriage). It remains, nevertheless, for teacher educators to assert the kind of critical relationship they wish to adopt in relation to these newly formed alignments in the school curriculum policy. The new language will emerge, not when the weak bow down before the strong. The weak could be reinterpreted as powerful when new, deeper moral, ethical and social readings are offered as new possibilities.

Teacher educators can develop a new language if they turn to each other for inspiration within the context of university education and higher education, which seek to find new knowledges and new systems of talking across the divides. Unfortunately, many teacher educators frame themselves as recipients of the wisdom and language from others, perhaps also defining their identity too closely with the protection of the disciplines in the curriculum of undergraduate bachelor degrees. We as teacher educators tasked with the possibility of creating new learners within the SSE, should embrace the responsibility to be more critical of the capitulation to the forces of dictation from outside our contexts. Instead, we should be directing ourselves to build capacity to become dreamers of new possibilities of the relationships between the bounded boundaries, building a “pedagogy of hope” (Vithal, 2008), recognising the powerful conflict and dialogues which mark our present education and knowledge systems. We should be seeking to expose the value of aligning different disciplines alongside each other, and seeking forms of fusion, critical forms of inquiry designed to examine, as I hope this paper has, the social, cultural and political values of all disciplines. Teacher education has the possibility to cultivate a generation of inquiring minds, creative and critical of our social systems and our organisation of knowledge systems. This, after all, is what the new school curriculum professes. Many, however, choose to interpret training for practising in the new curriculum in robotic, functionalist terms. We need to learn to dream, trust our potential, and seek new ways of ‘being’ in the social sciences. Only then can we begin to develop our new language *in, of, and for*, the social sciences, which traverses all areas of knowledge production: arts, science, mathematics, music, dance, drama, languages, technology, confidently - since all knowledge systems are but social sciences.

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