

FROM APARTHEID EDUCATION TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: The challenges of transformation..

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INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to tease out the complexity of change in South Africa regarding the shift from a dual system (special and ordinary) to an inclusive outcomes based approach to education. The paper argues against relying on the transformation context for transformation. Relying on the transformational context for transformation has not yielded the desired results six years after a democratic government has been put into place. In order to move away from practices that are disabilist, racist and sexist, a radical intervention is required philosophically, structurally and practically. Therefore this paper does the following: (i) provides a brief background to transformation within the South African context, (ii) discusses the complexity of the paradigm shift, (iii) provides an account of the challenges, (v) suggests what needs to be done in order to make this change possible.

Background

Apartheid education in South Africa promoted race, class, gender and ethnic divisions and has emphasised separateness, rather than common citizenship and nationhood. The fiscal allocation in terms of race, where “white” education enjoyed more funding, resulted in wide-scale disparities with regard to all aspects of education. This included: quality of teacher training, level of teacher training, resources at schools, location of schools, support materials and almost every aspect of educational service delivery.

Education policy and curriculum development in apartheid South Africa was used as an ideological state apparatus to promote the interests of the ruling apartheid government. The philosophical base of the curriculum was fundamental pedagogics, which served apartheid interests. The point being made is that Ideological interests cannot provide adequate instruments of knowledge.

Besides the issues raised above, apartheid education produced a dual system of education which included a mainstream and special education component.

These components were also characterized by racial disparity. The consequence of the dual system and racial disparity resulted in large numbers of learners being excluded from the mainstream of education. The attrition and failure rate amongst a large number of learners are estimated at between 40 and 50% according to the National Policy Investigation into Education Support Services (National Education Policy Investigation: 1992). The National Commission on Special Education Needs and Training (NCSNET) and National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS), commissioned by the Minister of National Education to investigate the state of special education and support in South Africa and make recommendations, sums up the situation quite clearly when they reported that:

“Historically the areas of special needs education, or specialized education, and education support services provision have reflected the general inequalities of South African society, with disadvantaged learners (the majority of learners) receiving inadequate or no provision. Specialized education and support has predominantly been provided for a small percentage of learners with disabilities within ‘special’ schools and classes. Most learners with disability have either fallen outside of the system or been ‘mainstreamed by default’. The curriculum and education system as a whole has generally failed to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population, resulting in massive numbers of dropouts, push-outs, and failures. While some attention has been given to the schooling phase with regard to ‘special needs and support’, the other levels or bands of education have been seriously neglected” (1997:i)

These and other issues raised above, formed the background for the adoption of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) as a new curriculum approach. The decision to adopt OBE was a political decision taken by the Ministry of Education with the intention of addressing the disparities and difficulties associated with apartheid education.

A central feature of the transformation process from an apartheid society to a democratic society has been the emergence and development of new education policy that corresponds with political and social practices within a democratic milieu. OBE which underpins the efforts to reshape the curriculum has since 1996 become an important component of education policy in South Africa.

The urgency with which the new Ministry of Education in South African implemented the OBE curriculum gave rise to a major challenge. That challenge involves transforming the dual system of education (special and ordinary education) to a single, inclusive OBE system.

Separate education systems (special and ordinary) were in existence in South Africa for over a century. Consequently educationists became familiar with particular theories and practices that were associated with this dual system of

education (These theories and practices are discussed in detail later). Learners were excluded from the ordinary system of education and placed in a special education system if educationists thought that it was in the learner's best interests. When learners did not meet the requirements laid down by the ordinary education system they were placed in special education facilities by those who thought that they would benefit from special programmes.

OBE's three premises are:

All students can learn and succeed, but not on the same day in the same way.

Successful learning promotes even more successful learning.

Schools control the conditions that directly affect successful school learning (1994:9) (Writer's emphasis)

The National Commission on Special Education Needs and Training (NCSNET) and National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) (1997) suggested that OBE is both inclusive and flexible in terms of learning time.

The Government Gazette, (No. 19640) titled, Assessment Policy in the General Education and Training Band, Grades R to 9 and ABET, confirms what is being said above is that OBE is an inclusive system. The notice, which includes a foreword by the Minister of Education, defines OBE as a:

"learner centered, result oriented approach to education and training that builds on the notion that all learners need to and can achieve their full potential, but that this may not happen in the same way or within the same period.

It implies the following:

what learners are to learn is clearly defined; each learner's progress is based on demonstrated achievement; each learner's needs are accommodated through multiple teaching and learning strategies and assessment tools; and **each learner is provided the time and assistance to realise his or her potential**". (1998:9) (writer's emphasis)

The above-mentioned document does not make mention of failing but makes reference to progression. It suggests that learners should progress according to their age cohort and that more time should be allocated to a learner who requires additional assistance. If a learner needs assistance the learner does not have to be kept back in the grade. It also states that no learner should stay in the same phase for longer than four years (maximum duration of phases). The Government Gazette, (19640) explaining assessment, is quite clear on the notion of progression:

"It is expected that in the main, **learners will progress with their age cohort**. Where it is felt that a learner needs more time to demonstrate achievement, decisions shall be made based on the advice of the relevant

role-players: educators, learners, parents and education support services. If a learner needs more time to achieve particular outcomes, **he or she need not be retained in a grade for a whole year. No learner should stay in the same phase for longer than four years**, unless the provincial Head of Department has given approval based on specific circumstances and professional advice. (1998:14) (writer's emphasis)

The then Director General of National Education in South Africa Chabanyi Manganyi when discussing OBE had this to say:

“Learning programmes should facilitate the creation of opportunities for all learners, **including those who are disabled in some or other way**, to strive, towards the attainment of similar learning outcomes. Such an approach does not deny that there are educationally relevant differences among individuals. Neither does it rule out approaches that would recognize different levels of mastery. Implicit in the ideas of national standards, however, is the belief that differences in learners' interests and abilities should challenge educators to explore a host of alternative instructional methods and approaches. It follows that learners should be given the opportunity of coping with demanding performance standards at their own pace rather than at the pace of the majority of learners in a class” (1997:5)
(writer's emphasis)

In general, the NCSNET/NCESS and information contained in the Government Gazette number 19640 suggest that all learners can learn within a single inclusive system. Time is flexible and learning and teaching is not dictated by the clock or the calendar. Further, it follows that learners should not be taken out of the class and placed in a special education system. Support is provided for learners who need extra assistance and these learners are not kept back in their grade. The central message is that all learning is recognized no matter how small the step.

What does this shift entail in terms of race and disabling identity construction?

Within the South African context a shift towards an inclusive OBE model where all learners experience success will entail moving away from a dual system (special and ordinary) to a single system of education. The dual system of education of the past had its own theory, assumptions, models, practices and tools. This system with a 'special education separate sector' according to Barton & Oliver (1994) had its definitions, policies and practices shaped largely by the medical and psychological perspectives (p.67). Tomlinson, cited by Barton & Oliver (1994), argues that this was a discriminatory system since “to be categorised out of 'normal' education represents the ultimate in non-achievement in terms of ordinary educational goals” (p.69).

On the other hand, a single inclusive system of education based on the rights model has its own theory, assumptions, models, practices and tools. Oliver (1996) is incisive on this issue between the old and the new when he says:

“At the ontological level this has led, not to a denial of the problem oriented nature of disability, but of its assumptions of pathology. At the epistemological level middle range theorising has been turned on its head; disability is caused not by the functional, physical or psychological limitations of impaired individuals but by the failure of society to remove its disabling barriers and social restrictions. At the experiential level disabled people are increasingly seeing their problems as stemming from social oppression (Sutherland, 1981) and institutionalised discrimination (Barnes 1991)). In other words disability is something wrong with society” (p.129)

Oliver argues that the rights model moves away from a pathological assumption, individual deficit theory and institutional discrimination. Given the shift from apartheid and special education to an inclusive OBE system, different theories and practices must emerge. The Department of National Education (1997) in a document titled ‘Outcomes-based Education in South Africa: Background information for educators’ suggests strongly that in order for OBE to materialise there has to be a “move from one paradigm to another; from one way of looking at something to a new way. A move to a new mind set, a new attitude, a new way of thinking..” (p.6)

This quote, however, does not capture the entirety of the concept of paradigms. Paradigms include not only thinking, ways of seeing and evaluative judgements but also, crucially, practices.

To make the shift from Special Education which existed outside the regular education system in the past towards Outcomes Based Education as a single inclusive system requires a paradigm shift.

It may be useful to look at the issue of paradigms within the social sciences and assess what this shift entails for the development of the curriculum. Within the social science there are multiple paradigms (Skrtic, 1991). Skrtic makes reference to four paradigms which include:

Table 1

Radical Humanist	Radical Structuralist
Intepretivist	Functionalist

Each of these paradigms mean a different: (i) set of assumptions, (ii) framework of thought, (iii) and way of perceiving, thinking and doing associated with a particular vision of reality.

The definitions of the various paradigms provides more light on the issue. The following information relies on the work of Skrtic (1991) citing Burrell & Morgan (1979)

- (i) The functionalist paradigm: Social scientists believe that they can be objective and understand realities through observation without being participants in processes. They are of the opinion that their stance is neutral and their assessment of situations is therefore not influenced by their own interests and positions. Consequently they believe that education is neutral.

As such, it,

"...reflects the attempt, par excellence, to apply the models and methods of the natural sciences to the study of human affairs... The functionalist approach to social science tends to assume that the social world is composed of relatively concrete empirical artifacts and relationships which can be identified, studied and measured through approaches derived from the natural sciences (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p.26)

- (ii) Interpretivist Paradigm: Social scientists of this persuasion are concerned with understanding the social construction of reality-the way people create and share meaning. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979:31) the interpretive paradigm is informed by a concern to understand the world as it is, to understand the fundamental nature of the social world at the level of subjective experience. Practitioner's standpoint is cohesive, ordered and integrated. Within the South African context the interpretive theorist will attempt to understand reality. It will not be an attempt to address and rectify the conflict, domination and contradictions that are essential characteristics of South African education. Further, whilst the programme of change plays no part in the interpretive theoretical framework, the nature and extent of change concerning the curriculum and related issues in education are fundamental concerns facing South African educationists.
- (iii) Radical Humanist Paradigm: Their view of society emphasizes the importance of transcending the limitations of existing social structures, which they view as distorting true human consciousness. The major concern for theorists approaching the human situation in these terms is with release from the constraints which existing social arrangements place upon human development (Burrell and Morgan: 1979:32).
- (iv) Radical Structuralist Paradigm: They, like the radical humanist, advocate change. Whereas radical humanists are concerned with

ideological structures and individual consciousness, radical structuralists focus their critique on material structures and are concerned with the consciousness of entire categories of individuals, such as races, genders, and socioeconomic classes. Radical Structuralism, like Radical Humanism, is concerned with changing consciousness, but seeks a sociology of radical change which supports the view that change in society must be accompanied by change in structures of society.

South African educators could be located in any one of the above paradigms or could be engaging in practices that are common to one or more paradigms since there are a number of dynamics that would have influenced them. The following discussion attempts to examine those dynamics.

Ideology: from Apartheid Education to Transformative Inclusive OBE ?

South African society in the new democracy has to undergo changes that are reflected in the constitution which means that discrimination of all sorts, that includes, race gender, social class and disability, need to be addressed.

Firstly, it is possible that large numbers of educators are influenced by functionalism. According to Beard and Morrow (1981), who view pedagogics in the same way as functionalism, Universities such as Durban-Westville, Western Cape, Zululand, North and to a lesser extent Fort Hare propagated the tenets of Pedagogics (p.14). Beard and Morrow (1981) suggest that the majority of black teachers in South Africa that were trained in UNISA were also influenced by the tenets of Pedagogics (p.i). Pedagogics is considered by Beard and Morrow as a way of theorizing that, "makes autocratic and monopolistic claims to being the only reliable, or 'authentic', way of studying education. They argue that most writers in the field are arrogantly dismissive of alternatives (p.ii) Parker (1981) argues that pedagogics "can be seen as a highly efficient method of control for the maintenance of the status quo" (p.26). Thus one can argue that large numbers of South African educators have been trained within a paradigm that had to do with prediction and control and belief in the soundness of a non-democratic system.

Arguably, major learners resisted and fought against this type of prediction and control. The transition to a democratic state is proof of resistance. Thus nature of political oppression and struggles in South Africa make it extremely difficult to pigeon hole educationists. McKay in citing Zulu is quite incisive here:

"While the Bantu Education Act of 1953 was designed to reinforce passive acceptance among blacks of perpetual servitude in a racist capitalist society...it was the youth who not only redefined their own role in society but articulated new visions of a post-apartheid society (p.102)

Quite clearly whilst many educationists in this country were victims of apartheid ideology, others resisted this ideology. However, where does this leave us with regard to paradigms? Enslin (1981) suggests that the majority of teachers training were underpinned by Pedagogics, a sub-branch of Fundamental Pedagogics. Fundamental Pedagogics was used in most universities in this country (Morrow et al: 1981)

Thus it is possible that many educators may still remain under the influence of the old paradigm. The question is do they understand the implications of the old paradigm and what it requires to make the shift to the demands of a more emancipatory discourse. OBE and Curriculum 2005 requires of learners to ultimately become reflective thinkers, independent, creative, resourceful and critical.

Secondly, Calvinist and Christian National Education could have also been a major influence on the thinking of South African educationists (1981:p110). Many of the writers under the Calvinist and Christian National Education (CNE) as cited by Gluckman (ibid) have this to say about the learner (child):

- (a) T.A. Viljoen (1970) ..".The child who is first an object, becomes a fellow subject in a meaningful world.."
- (b) Landman and Gous (1969) He is 'not adult', not responsible, morally not dependent"

This type of thinking requires educators to adopt the view that the acceptance of the conclusion that achievement is only realised through obedience. Macleod (1995:68) refers to the Calvinist notion of the child as born in original sin and thus deficient. She argues that as a result of this Calvinist notion, the child is regarded as in need of guidance by an adult who has overcome such a state so that the child can also achieve "normal" adulthood. This state of adulthood, namely independent, competent, wise skilful, responsible and disciplined. The main point here is that educational needs of the child as espoused by Fundamental Pedagogics are a social construction based on the latent assumption of the child as deficient.

Assuming that the learner is an object and there to mould, is in contradiction to the tenets of OBE and the general ethos of curriculum 2005 where educators and learners engage in a partnership in the learning experience and where there is mutual respect. It is important for educators to unpack the implications of the previous system in order to make a change.

Another important influence of teacher training could be gleaned from the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Training of White Persons as Teachers (1969). It had this to say:

"A national system of teacher training must be such as to produce teachers who are willing and able to achieve the aims of education that

are pursued or should be pursued in our schools. The system of training must therefore be one that will produce teachers... (c) who ... are imbued with the ideal... of teaching towards the development of their pupils into men and women of rectitude, efficient and loyal citizens of their country..(Beard et al. 1981:9)

It seems that such training could have impacted on large numbers of teachers. Much has to be done to influence ways and perceptions of understanding the manner in which the democratic South Africa has to go forward. These perceptions will have to change amongst educators in classrooms of the country. OBE planning will have to take seriously the issue of injecting a non-racist as well as a non-sexist, anti-class and non-disabilist discourse.

Equally important is the need to take cognisance of how societal factors such as poverty and its concomitant ills affect teaching and learning. Fundamental Pedagogics bracketed out sociological considerations in explaining teaching and learning. It's research agenda did not take into consideration historical and contextual issues. Transformational OBE includes sociological considerations and how it affects teaching and learning. It takes seriously the notion of history

Paradigm shift: from Special Education to Inclusive Education?

With regard to a paradigm shift towards Inclusive Education, policy developers will have to take seriously the influence of psychological and educational psychological theory since the majority of special education discourses are located within educational psychology frameworks and departments. According to Fulcher (1989), "the theme of professionalism pervades medical discourse and its associated discourses: psychology, social work, occupational therapy, rehabilitation, counselling, physiotherapy and educational discourse" (p.28). Functionalism underpins all the above-mentioned discourses.

Much of the understanding around learning breakdown shapes the belief that problems are located within learners. Very little is said about system deficiencies. The manner in which learners are socialised, exposure to intellectual work, poverty and its concomitant social problems have not been taken seriously in understanding why there is a breakdown in learning.

Special education theory is located within a functionalist paradigm and is concerned with both learners who experience learning breakdown and those who have gifted behaviours. The belief that the system works and any breakdown is caused by individuals results in invoking the pathological label. That there is something wrong with individual is a common explanation for failure.

In order to shift paradigms, a rethinking is required around one's consciousness around disability, race, class and gender as is suggested within the radical Structuralist paradigm. Thus the first step is to move from an understanding of

disability that is shaped by the lay discourse to an understanding underpinned by a rights discourse. Secondly, barriers to learning in the system need to be identified and interventions need to be made. In other words one needs to examine what impediments exist in the system that prevent access to learning. These barriers could include poverty, ideology, physical access, inflexible curriculum, inappropriate language, communication channels, inaccessible built environments, lack of or inappropriate transport and similar factors within the system that impedes access to learning. Arguably, there are some barriers that exist within children, for example, neurological impairment. But these barriers need to be addressed through pedagogical responses, not by carrying out psychometric tests that offer little in terms of programme planning.

In the case of the gifted, either enrichment or acceleration could be used to ensure the gifted learner is not neglected. Enrichment will entail creating more stimulating opportunities for the learner in the area of giftedness. This could include, linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic or personal areas of competence or expertise. Acceleration could also be utilised to ensure that the learner does not stay in a grade if he/she has mastered that component of work.

Table 2 attempts to highlight what shifts need to take place both philosophically and structurally. A new service could not be delivered within an old system. Special Education Theory is located within the functionalist paradigm and in order to ensure that consciousness changes together with a changes in structures there is a need to move towards a Radical Structuralist Paradigm. Inclusive Education like OBE has to do with rethinking issues of race, class, disability and gender as well as changing structures, for example, organograms in education departments that delivered the old service. The changes could would mean the following:

- * shift from a functional paradigm to a radical Structuralist paradigm. This will mean moving personnel from special education department to regular education sections as dedicated personnel in curriculum services, early childhood education, adult and basic education, physical resources, finance and other sections of the single education department. It will also mean rethinking and revisiting understanding of special education need to barriers to learning. Thus system deficiencies will be identified and all learners will have equal access to a single curriculum.
- * shift from pathological(medical/individual explanations) to understanding system deficiencies, for example, provide a ramp to physically disabled learners to gain access to the curriculum thus creating enabling conditions.
- * shift from the Special Education Act to the Amendment of the South African Schools Act to enable all children to go to the neighbourhood school provided that support mechanisms are put into place.

- * shift from labelling and classification to using OBE's specific outcomes, assessment criteria, performance indicators, range statements, co-operative learning, grade system
- Shift from standardized tests to teacher produced diagnostic tests that measures the learners learning potential and identifies how it can be improved.
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Table 2

Paradigm	Functionalism	Radical Structuralism
Theory	Special Education Theory	Outcomes Based Education
Assumptions	pathological, within child deficits	System orientated, take into consideration diverse contexts
Practices	Segregation from Mainstream	Includes all learners
Tools	Standardized Tests	Criterion Referenced Tests Teacher Produced Tests Assessing the potential to learn
Model	Special Education Act	Amendment to South African Schools Act

Summary

Thus this paper suggests that much has to be done with regard to giving teeth to policy issues. A shift from a contents based apartheid education system to a inclusive outcomes based system must focus on redress and equity. That the shift is of a paradigmatic nature and for OBE to be implemented properly there has to be major changes with regard to philosophy, structures and practices. The paradigm shift from apartheid and special education to an inclusive OBE calls for a shift from functionalism to radical structuralism. The shift entails moving from racist, disabilist, sexist and classist assumptions to non-racist, non-disabilist, anti-class and non-sexist assumptions. Thus there would be a move away from the pathological medical model, Special Education Act, labelling and standardized test to a system oriented approach, South African Schools Act, including all learners and criterion referenced tests.

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