

SEÇÃO ESPECIAL: CENTENÁRIO DE PAULO FREIRE

Freirean hope as educational construct for teacher education in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This article argues that South African teacher education and development policy lack an explicit philosophy of education and corresponding pedagogy that promote transformation and equality. After an analysis of some works by Paulo Freire, it is argued that it is in a Freirean philosophy of education and in a pedagogy of hope that the praxis of teacher education establishes the notion of teachers as unfinished beings and agents of hope. This article offers an opportunity to imagine what Freire's *Pedagogy of hope* (FREIRE, 1994) could contribute to the dialogue regarding the policy, gazetted in 2011 and revised in 2015, on the minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications in South Africa. The fundamental role that teacher education institutions can play in contributing to the transformation of education is defended, particularly if the philosophy of Freirean education and a pedagogy of hope are compromised. The article concludes with an attempt at re-orientation of teacher education policy.

Keywords: Educational philosophy. Paulo Freire. Pedagogy of hope. Teacher training.

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Esperança freireana como construção educacional para a formação de professores(as) na África do Sul

RESUMO

O presente artigo argumenta que a política de formação e desenvolvimento de professores(as) na África do Sul carecem de uma filosofia da educação explícita e correspondente pedagogia que promovam transformação e igualdade. Após uma análise de algumas obras de Paulo Freire, argumenta-se que uma práxis de formação de professores(as) encontra na filosofia da educação freireana e na pedagogia da esperança a compreensão de professores(as) como seres inacabados e agentes da esperança. Este artigo oferece uma oportunidade para imaginar o que a *Pedagogia da esperança* de Freire poderia contribuir para o diálogo acerca da política, publicada em 2011 e revisada em 2015, que define os requerimentos mínimos de qualificação para a formação de professores(as) na África do Sul. Defende-se o papel fundamental que instituições de formação de professores(as) podem desenvolver, contribuindo para a transformação da educação, especialmente quando a filosofia de educação e a pedagogia da esperança são prejudicadas. O artigo conclui com uma proposta de reorientação da política de formação de professores(as).

Palavras-chave: Filosofia da educação. Paulo Freire. Pedagogia da esperança. Formação de professores(as).

Esperanza freireana como construcción educativa para la formación docente en Sudáfrica

RESUMEN

Este artículo sostiene que la política sudafricana de formación y desarrollo docente carece de una filosofía educativa explícita y de una pedagogía correspondiente que promueva la transformación y la igualdad. Tras un análisis de algunas obras de Paulo Freire, sostengo que dentro de una filosofía freireana de la educación y una pedagogía de la esperanza, la praxis de la formación docente establece la noción de maestros como seres inacabados y agentes de esperanza. Este artículo ofrece la oportunidad de imaginar lo que la *Pedagogía de la Esperanza* de Freire (FREIRE, 1994) podría contribuir al diálogo sobre la política, publicada en 2011 y revisada en 2015, en cuanto a los requisitos mínimos para la formación de profesores en Sudáfrica. Yo defiendo el papel fundamental que las instituciones de formación docente pueden desempeñar para contribuir a la transformación de la educación, sobre todo si la filosofía de la educación freireana y una pedagogía de la esperanza son comprometidas. El artículo concluye con un intento de reorientación de la política de formación docente.

Palabras clave: Filosofía educativa. Paulo Freire. Pedagogía de la esperanza. Formación docente.

INTRODUCTION

If teacher education wants to contribute to democratising South African society, the process of taking society from oppression, inequality and injustice to hope, equality and social justice is important. This article explores hope and teacher education in terms of the Freirean philosophy of education as far as consciousness, orientation towards the future, focusing on ontology and epistemology, as well as agency of change are concerned. This article offers an opportunity to imagine what Freire's *Pedagogy of hope* (FREIRE, 1994) could contribute to the dialogue on teacher education in South Africa, since it speaks to social justice pedagogies, particularly on issues of addressing inequality and injustice in teacher education as situated in higher education.

A pedagogy embedded in epistemology and ontology goes hand in hand with education and teacher education as expressions of hope. Teacher education, therefore, should include a questioning of understanding (epistemology) and humaneness (ontology). In the light of many commentators' remarks about the despair in our society, it seems quite obvious that there needs to be some serious scrutiny in relation to making hope a necessary orientation in education. The notion of education for hope therefore should be an important aspect of teacher education.

In imagining what Freire's development of hope in education has to offer teacher education in South Africa, I draw on the education issues raised in the National Development Plan (NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION, 2011). In line with the National Development Plan (NDP), I suggest an agenda for mass-based dialogue for the re-orientation of current teacher education policy. I argue for the pivotal role that higher education and teacher education institutions can play in contributing to transformation in education, particularly if they engage with a Freirean philosophy of education and a pedagogy of hope. As such, questions are raised regarding transformation for whom, which challenges contemporary issues such as an approach to a response to the NDP in particular and to teacher education policy in general.

The notion of hope in Freirean thought comes from an expression by a poor farmworker in the Forest Zone in Pernambuco, who said to Paulo Freire: "I am a countryman, sir. I have no tomorrow that is any different from today, that is any different from yesterday" (FREIRE, 1997, p. 42). This is a despairing consciousness and therefore not progressive. He has given up on the need for a tomorrow, not to mention the expectation of a tomorrow that could be different from today or even yesterday. Freire's progressive, critical consciousness "is what makes that being, one *present in the world*, also a being fundamentally in need of reference to a tomorrow" (FREIRE, 2004, p. 100). This is where the engagement of a critical consciousness starts – in the hunger for a tomorrow as a crucial point of reference. Thus, hope becomes a necessary component of one's "radically being a *presence in the world*"

(FREIRE, 2004, p. 100, author's highlight). Mere rebellious thinking and actions are not enough. Transformation implies a dialectic between denouncing injustice and announcing a new society (FREIRE, 1998). Freire then argues that the "matrix of hope is the same as that of the possibility of education for human beings – becoming conscious of themselves as unfinished beings" (FREIRE, 2004, p. 100). Aware of one's unfinished nature, one becomes aspirational about tomorrow in a continuous hopeful search. This is what progressive education wants to achieve. Education, he argues, is indeed the process of that search for hope that resides in a tomorrow that is possible.

That aspiration starts now. He argues that "there has never been a greater need to underscore educational practice with a sense of hope than there is today" (FREIRE, 2004, p. 100). The reference to "today" points to the current global context in which neoliberal market determinism and the cynicism of a fatalistic mindset have captured the self-consciousness of individuals. Freire centres his thoughts in *Pedagogy of Hope* on two cornerstones of education practice: firstly, the matrix of hope is the matrix of education; and secondly, what we experience contextually as globalisation makes a critical pedagogy of hope a necessary corollary of a contemporary critical consciousness.

What does this mean for the young man from Paulo Freire's home town in the Forest Zone? One may find oneself subjected to countless limitations now, but education helps us to grasp the knowledge that, while change is difficult, it nevertheless is possible. There is no such thing as a tomorrow that has to be the same as today or yesterday.

This understanding relates directly to one's presence in the world as a human being with a critical consciousness. One's critical consciousness tells one that one does not have to simply adapt to this world as it is today. One is empowered by critical consciousness to act on the world as an intervention for its future outcomes. This is the deep meaning of the notion "progressive". Adding progressive to a critical consciousness launches one's "presence in the world" into an *intervening presence* in order to change the world. We intervene to make the world "less ugly, more human, more just, more decent" (FREIRE, 2004, p. 101). This is *hope* as a world-transforming education, seeking a different and better tomorrow.

HOPE AND EDUCATION

Paulo Freire was an individual "who was clearly driven by a sense of hope, a sense of a better tomorrow, a more humanized world" (KIRYLO, 2011, p. 162). For Freire, human beings cannot do without hope and for one to have hope is to have "a vision for tomorrow" (FREIRE, 1997, p. 45) and he understood the importance of the crucial relationship between education and hope. He explains his thoughts in chapters eight and nine of his book *Pedagogy of indignation*, published in 2004 (see pages 97 to 122). The concept of hope in Freire's thinking became apparent when he explored and emphasised psychoanalysis. In

reflecting upon *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, he recounted his own significant period of sadness and depression after the death of his first wife. Although he would relentlessly critique pessimism, he described and discussed his own despair and the process of overcoming it. In *Pedagogy of hope*, Freire notes, “in seeking the deepest why of my pain, I was educating my hope in which one day I would see myself delivered from my depression” (FREIRE, 1994, p. 29). He “invented the concept of hope” in order to deal with his experiences of pessimism. This pessimism can be described as being personalised, but it also addressed a socio-cultural (or socio-political) dimension. Freire placed emphasis on self-analysis, but never in isolation and always related to the political and educational context. He took very seriously that the reading of the world can never be exclusively philosophical or interpretive, but that it should be related to changing the world. At the same time, he rejected activism without theory. Freire linked “the journey of the soul with the nature of politics itself, especially what he sees as the nature of a utopian politics” (IRWIN, 2012, p. 153). He spoke of a utopianism founded on authentic hope and a hope invented to overcome existential despair.

Irwin (2012) believes that the origins of Freire’s invention of hope could be drawn from Hegel and Marxism, as well as Christianity. “I do not understand human existence and the struggle needed to improve it apart from hope and dream; hope is an ontological need” (FREIRE, 1994, p. 8). Freire sees hope as connected between subject and world. In describing the relationship between hope and education, Paulo Freire draws a distinction between the agency of a teacher on one hand, and the pedagogy of teaching on the other. The former relates to the possibility that a teacher could be hopeful or hopeless while engaging with learners in their active role. This could be a serious challenge to education that requires specific interventions for teacher development (FREIRE, 2004, p. 97). However, it is possible that, regardless of a teacher’s sense of hope or despair, the weakness could be more philosophical than agency based. The philosophical questions underlying the pedagogy of hope focus on methodology and epistemology. The former means that the teacher negates the essence of educational practice. The latter unveils an epistemological option entailed in that education. Put succinctly, one is a contradictory negation, while the other is a propagation based on an educational option. This option is philosophical in nature and concerns itself with the epistemological thrust of education.

What does it mean to engage in a pedagogy of hope? It asserts, Freire argues, that

we are capable of transforming the world, naming our own surroundings, of apprehending, of making sense of things, of deciding, of choosing, of valuing, and finally, of *ethicizing* the world, our mobility within it and through history necessarily comes to involve *dreams* towards whose realization we struggle (FREIRE, 2004, p. 7).

In reflecting on hope, Freire draws on existential experience that recognises the self as being unfinished, with a capacity for questioning, speaking of itself and others, “to pronounce the world, to unveil, to reveal, and to hide truths”, and as becoming a presence in the world (FREIRE, 2004, p. 98). The consciousness of the unfinished nature of beings implies “a permanent process of hope-filled search” (FREIRE, 2004, p. 100), with education as that process.

TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF HOPE

One of the main shifts in Freire’s education philosophy and thinking concerns the recognition of different contexts of education and praxis. To address widespread despair, also in the South African context, the place to start is with the engagement of a critical consciousness. Because hope is based on the future, teachers should have the future as a point of reference in their praxis. If the future is indeed the point of reference within education, then hope becomes a necessary component. If the outcome for teacher education is to “improve” the quality of teacher education and development, to also “improve” the quality of teachers and teaching, the chances are that a serious engagement with the notion of the future seems elusive.

Teachers need to grasp the knowledge that change is difficult. If teacher education acknowledges this, then the policy should begin to direct teachers toward transformational education. The policy should, in some way, express that teachers should be an “intervening presence” in changing the world (FREIRE, 2004, p. 101). To help address social, political, economic and other inequalities, teacher education should take up the challenge of developing teachers as agents of hope. The way in which teacher education could approach this matter is in the engagement of philosophical interpretation related to action based on methodology and epistemology. South African teacher education policy requires some imaginative epistemological thrust. As agents of hope, teachers need to be educated in the capabilities of transforming the world. In addition, there needs to be some concrete directives in the policy for making the existential experience of teachers and their awareness of their “unfinishedness” part of the programme. This calls for a rethink of placing the ontological and epistemological aspects of an agreed-upon philosophy of education in South Africa at centre stage in teacher education. The ontological nature of teaching and learning calls for greater emphasis on self-knowledge through self-reflection – on the part of teachers – in order to understand their own cultural identity and teaching praxis. Teachers also need to connect with their learners, parents and the community in which they work in such a way that they engage with the knowledge of themselves and the other, as well as recognise what they do not know.

In the *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* (DHET, 2015a), as well as the consequent revised version by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2015b), situational learning alludes to learning about cultural identity within South African society. Freire argues for a reading of the world that is authentic and not imposed by academics and experts. “Learning *about* context” (DHET, 2011) should be much broader and re-orientate itself to “reading the world” in the different contexts and conditions in which learners and communities live. Learning *about* context does not imply anything other than understanding. Working with challenges, such as poverty, HIV and Aids, also does not imply any action to change or transform the living experiences of those communities. Daily experience and the socialising character of the school should also be brought to the centre as part of the education process. In doing this, the lives and backgrounds of learners and their communities are shown to be a valued – though not the only – part of learning and teaching. If the relationship between learning and teaching is regarded as dialectical, then it would lead to learners teaching and teachers learning about the daily experiences in their world. Teachers would also bring their own reading of the world into the learning context and be challenged, just as learners are challenged to question the status quo. If the *Revised Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* (DHET, 2015b) had been placed in a theoretical, philosophical and pedagogical framework for transformation, then situational learning could have been interpreted more broadly to include cultural identity as being crucial to learning and teaching.

Other than situational learning, the importance of language in education cannot be stressed enough. The *Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* (DHET, 2015b) places the issue of language not in situational learning, but in fundamental learning. The understanding thereof, however, has nothing to do with language as part of a cultural identity necessary for learning and teaching. For teachers to be agents of hope in helping to shape a better and transformed future, language should play an important role.

Thus, the language of learners and teachers, as well as of the broader society, has to be brought into the classroom and wherever learning takes place. For this to happen, teacher education should develop those attitudes, skills and values that would capacitate and empower teachers and learners to deal with language variety in a constructive, rather than a destructive, way. An example is to create opportunities for learners to use language in different registers and contexts where it would be appropriate to use their own semantics and syntax, and to give them credit for that. At other times, they could illustrate why a different or even more formal register would only enhance communication because of a particular audience that needs to get the message. Language education in teacher education has to take cognisance of South African contexts and situations regarding poverty and disease.

For the contexts and situations of dire poverty and related conditions to evolve, thereby leading South Africa out of despair, we need agents of hope. The essence of teacher education presupposes agency and the development of teachers as agents of hope, but then this has to be considered important enough to become part of teacher education programmes – not only as an idea or an outcome, but as a pedagogy based in a philosophy, in which ontology and epistemology are central. Ontology would ascribe importance to the inclusion of all interest groups and individuals as unfinished beings with the agency of hope. Epistemology would lead to the knowledge that includes that of learners and teachers; not only expert knowledge and textbook knowledge, but also knowledge borne out of the acts of learning by and teaching a future generation.

TEACHER EDUCATION POLICY AND TEACHER PRAXIS

The Department of Education (DoE) stipulates the roles and competences that form the basis of current teacher education policy in the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (DoE, 2000). The precursor to the roles of teachers in the *Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* states that these “should be understood as everyday functions of the collective of all educators at a school” (DHET, 2015b, p. 58). These roles are extensive and do not necessarily distinguish between the formal element of teaching and its material elements. The roles of teachers in fact comprise some material elements, but are presented as a formal definition of teaching (MORROW, 2007). The formal definition of teaching is not context-specific, while material elements are context-specific.

Although the policy states that the roles are collective, this seems not to be the case when the eleven basic competences of a beginner teacher (DHET, 2015b) are compared to these roles. Because these roles and competences do not clarify teaching and learning, as well as the dialectical relationship between the two, teachers could be overwhelmed if expected to be able to be competent in all the aspects listed. If the primary relationship between teacher and learner was at the centre of teacher education programmes, this might lead to a different set of roles and competences. Since context is not expected to drive teaching and learning, as expressed in the *Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* (DHET, 2015b), the policy does not recognise that different circumstances call for different ways of teaching and learning. Therefore, the definition in terms of material elements is inadequate.

These roles and competences of teachers are supposed to inform the policy and the programmes therein as guidelines for different teacher qualifications. In association with the types of learning, the roles and competences together should define teacher education. The alignment of these aspects of the teacher education policy becomes problematic when programmes are developed. The types of learning identified are not always very clear. I do

not call for strict compartmentalisation of types of knowledge, but I do not recognise these types in the literature on knowledge and learning. It would be helpful if knowledge as ways of knowing is dealt with in a more scientific way. If we do not, the distinction between the identified types of knowledge becomes confusing. Some reorientation to the concept of knowledge and the ways of knowing could prove valuable in South African teacher education. Knowledge, not given, but shaped by experience, is closely related to context and changing contexts. There is no one single way or system that can define knowledge. Schools play a very important role in disseminating and engaging with knowledge, and therefore teacher education should very carefully consider the concept of knowledge and how it influences teacher education policy and programmes. Different ways of knowing should be explored for inclusion in the development of teachers and, by extension, in teacher education. Some of the ways of knowing expressed as modes include aesthetic, scientific, interpersonal, intuition or intellect, narrative and paradigmatic, formal, practical and spiritual.

At face value, it might seem that all these modes are included in the types of learning, but they are not very apparent in them, or in the stipulations of different programmes for different qualifications. A Freirean approach to teacher education would include in this list: the opportunity to engage in affective expression, as well as opportunities to express thoughts, observations and experiences through listening, speaking, reading and writing, not only in professional circles; and opportunities to learn and experience the cultural identities of learners. This list could be regarded as open-ended to include what we need to implement for a new future that is better, more equal, democratic, free and humane.

Instead of the question “What sort of knowledge is of most worth?”, a whole range of questions could be posed to address a full range of modes of knowing. For a variety of modes of knowing to be accommodated in teacher education programmes, the issues that programme developers face need to shift. Teachers and educators cannot do programme development in isolation. This would defeat any attempt at participatory education or the acknowledgement of the knowledge of the learner – in this instance, students in teacher education programmes. If teacher education policy in South Africa called for a closer teacher-learner/student relationship, also with regard to curriculum development, the chances are that teachers in these processes would also learn and gain experience to become curriculum developers.

Closely related to teacher praxis is the question of the dialectical relationship between teaching and learning. This is not evident in the unpacking of the different types of learning in the teacher education policy. The notion that “there is no teaching without learning” needs much stronger expression. This ties in closely with teacher praxis, as well as with teacher development, which means that there has to be a closer relationship between

theory and practice. In addition, the process of action/reflection/action should be related to teacher praxis, and therefore form part of teacher education policy and programmes.

The process of curriculum development is born out of an action/reflection/research/action process. Reflection and research based on action, as skills need to be developed, honed and respected in teacher praxis. It is in reflection on practice and theory that teachers learn to think about their actions, question teaching and learning, regard and include the learner contexts, research areas of development, and integrate learning into follow-up action. In this way, teachers are also established as intellectuals who are not dependent solely on academics and experts for the development, improvement and transformation of their praxis. Although all the aspects mentioned above are incorporated into South African teacher education policy, this is not done consistently and is not applied to all programmes and qualifications, nor driven by any clear pronouncement on a philosophy of education and pedagogy. The general requirements for the “knowledge mix” in any Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree distinguish between specialised, “subject-focused”, disciplinary, pedagogical and practical learning, as well as “educationally-focused”, disciplinary, general pedagogical learning and situational learning (DHET, 2015b). For BEd (Foundation Phase Teaching), the requirements are a knowledge mix of disciplinary, pedagogical and practical learning. Situational learning is not mentioned specifically, although the document references barriers to learning, what would refer to that type of learning. No mention is made to “educationally-focused” disciplinary learning, only to “subject-focused” (Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills), which could be interpreted as that the foundations of education are not “specialist requirements” (DHET, 2015b, p. 24). The statement of the knowledge mix for BEd (Intermediate Phase Teaching) does not include the five learning types; it does, however, refer to disciplinary, pedagogical and practical learning as “(t)he basis specialising to teach each IP subject” (DHET, 2015b, p. 24) and the Senior Phase (DHET, 2015b).

The principles underpinning the design of programmes leading to teacher qualifications could be made clearer so as to speak to teachers as subjects of their own practice, of reflexive praxis, and of the discovery process and origins of knowledge, as well as the reorientation of the curriculum of the school. For example, this would firmly base these specialist requirements. If, for example, the values of an agreed-upon pedagogy of hope for teacher education in South Africa included participatory, situated, critical, democratic, dialogical, desocialisation, multicultural, research-orientated, activist and affective components – that is, specialist requirements for different teacher education qualifications – it would be grounded firmly for developing the competences of a newly qualified teacher.

Despite the gains made in education, the remaining challenges facing the system remain significant. Particular areas of concern for the education of the poor and rural communities

are access, retention and repetition rates, poor socio-economic conditions, and poor achievement of educational outcomes. Therefore we need a pedagogy of hope.

If teacher education enables someone to be competent in the professional practice of organising systematic learning and nurtures their commitment to do so, then the entire education community should be included, especially the poor and marginalised. If teachers are not of the same class as their learners, the emphasis in teacher education has to be on dealing with the differences in such a way that the cultural identities and socio-economic conditions of the learners are brought into the learning process, with due regard for the learners' life experiences, while not negating their own. This is exactly why Freire's *Pedagogy of hope* is seminal for South African education in general, and teacher education in particular. It is imperative that hope as an idea should drive South African education through education philosophy rooted in a pedagogy of hope in which the ontological and epistemological roots form the basis for teacher education. If hope does not drive education, despair will prevail and the current low output of the education system will continue.

EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY AND A PEDAGOGY OF HOPE

Freirean thinking with regard to a philosophy and a pedagogy of hope in education places "hope" at the forefront of educational practice in South Africa. This means that, through critical consciousness, an awareness of people as unfinished beings lays the foundation to address fatalism and determinism with regard to socio-economic conditions. Critical consciousness in the context of hope in education addresses the possibility of intervention in the course of history for the individual, moreover for the collective – that is, communities and society at large. When engaging with critical consciousness, it should be done from a critical pedagogical perspective. This means that we pose the question: How do we make critical consciousness work in all places, situations and contexts of learning, leading to a transformed society?

For critical consciousness to fulfill this mandate, the question of hope as constitutive of reflexive praxis becomes very important. Such praxis is the culmination of all ideas, understandings, reflections, researches, actions and history making for a new, transformed tomorrow. The Ministerial Committee for Teacher Education has called upon the government to focus on quality teacher education to deliver quality education for all. The recommendations refer to looking anew at the model of the school and the concept of "the teacher". The subsequent *National policy framework for teacher education and development* (DoE, 2006), the resulting *Policy on the minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications* (DHET, 2011), as well as the *Revised policy on the minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications* (DHET, 2015b) do not address the redefinition of schools, teachers and teaching adequately. The "types of learning" in it do not even hint at including

the definition and nature of teaching and teachers as important knowledge in the preparation for the teaching profession. In all of these committees, frameworks, policy documents and strategic plans undertaken by the government, no call is made for a re-orientation or the consideration of a critical pedagogy – or any pedagogy for that matter – or even a philosophy for South African education.

It is within Freirean philosophy and critical pedagogy that teacher education can encompass critical consciousness and teacher praxis that is informed by theory and practice, as well as by the particular and critical role of teacher action/reflection/action and research. Arguments for a single philosophy or multiple philosophies for South African education seem to be crucial for progress in the debate on education in general, and teacher education in particular. Higgs (2003) calls for a choice to draw on a fragmented philosophical discourse located in an African re-visioning of philosophy of education within the call for an African Renaissance. Parker (2003), in response to Higgs, calls for a particular strand of African philosophy called *Africana* philosophy. Le Grange (2004) critiques both these proposals and offers a reading of African(a) philosophy. It is in these arguments presented by the three scholars that the need for a serious contemplation of philosophy for Africa and South Africa is articulated. The issue is that we need to revisit and re-orientate the education philosophy located in the country, the continent and, indeed, the world. South African education needs participatory guidance and leadership in philosophical thinking and practice from higher education to give substance to education philosophy and pedagogy and, perhaps, a pedagogy of hope.

What I call for is the development of some guided philosophical approach that would speak to local, continental and global contexts. The reason for this is that it is necessary to come to some defining and concluding trends in education philosophy for the cause of democratisation and transformation to progress. All philosophical traditions, not only European and African, could be considered. The current relationships that South Africa has with the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) should also be taken into consideration. Therefore, in considering philosophical traditions, calls for a global context to inform the pedagogy of education policy should be considered seriously.

This article proposes that the Freirean education philosophy should be brought into our discourse, particularly because of its emphasis on ontology and epistemology – two branches of philosophy essential for transforming societies. Le Grange (2004) presents the work done by different scholars, such as Yusef Waghid, Wally Morrow and Nelleke Bak, as contributing to the philosophy of education discourse. This discourse needs to be broader than such scholars and their postgraduate students, and should also include undergraduates, teachers and other education practitioners beyond universities. I contend that the lack of philosophical clarity and drive in South African education contributes largely to the many

policy and praxis challenges that do not seem to be addressed adequately in the process of transformation. It does not help that the academic freedom of education philosophers does not take systemic education policy forward to build democracy. A philosophy of education conducive to developing a pedagogy of hope for teacher education in South Africa is what we need at this historical juncture – some almost thirty years after the birth of democracy in South Africa. To explore the feasibility of considering a pedagogy of hope for South African teacher education, I now proceed to analyse to what extent teacher education policy already speaks to such a pedagogy.

RE-ORIENTATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION

According to the *National Development Plan* (NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION, 2011), universities have four main functions, namely to educate and train people with high-level skills for employment in the public and private sectors; to produce new knowledge in science and the humanities, critique information and find new local and global applications for existing knowledge; to set norms and standards, along with to determine the curriculum, ethics and philosophy underpinning a national knowledge capital; and to provide opportunities for social mobility, in addition to strengthen equity, social justice and democracy.

All of these aspects raised in the NDP are already included in the many policy documents for basic education, as well as in policy pertaining to teacher education. However, all the work done thus far on equity, democratisation, participation and freeing the most vulnerable in society still does not seem to bring us close enough to quality education. We need to do something or some things differently; this is what makes education political. The choice for a pedagogy is deeply political on all levels of society. Institutions responsible for teacher education, officials and organisations taking up the responsibility of teacher development, and students of education and teachers need to chart an inclusive and participatory process, with each bringing their own emphases, interests and expertise.

Apart from the *Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* (DHET, 2015b), other policy developments have taken teacher education and development further. These include the *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications for Educators and Lecturers in Adult and Community Education and Training* (DHET, 2015a) and the *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators* (DHET, 2017). The South African Council for Educators (SACE) has adopted *Draft Professional Teaching Standards* (SACE, 2018) with the aim of providing the whole continuum of educator preparation and development and guiding educators to deepen and broaden their professional knowledge and understanding. What is problematic is that all these

developments do not speak to one another in terms of language usage and meaning. As an example, “teaching” in the SACE presentation does not reflect the language usage or organisation of concepts related to teaching in the same way as the *Revised Policy on the Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* (DHET, 2015b) in any recognisable way. Similarly, the participation of some higher education institutions involved in the *Teaching and Learning Development Capacity Improvement Programme* (TLDCIP), as reflected in the annual implementation progress report of 2018 (DHET, 2018), do not reflect the same language usage for similar concepts. All these policies, initiatives and programmes can do well to re-orientate in order to align policy, implementation and research so that these can actually have an influence for a more meaningful revision of policy to be undertaken, and not one that is only “minimal” and “mostly technical in nature” (DHET, 2015b, p. 5).

Teacher education should be re-orientated by starting with thinking about teaching and learning and asking the appropriate questions to make choices regarding a philosophy of education. In considering these choices, the question of the ontology and epistemology seem to be of great importance for the future that we would like to build. In establishing a clear direction regarding philosophy of education, the question of our pedagogy would be a next step. The pedagogical orientation would do well to opt for a pedagogy of hope for South Africa. Along with international critics of Paulo Freire, I expect that a major criticism in South African education would be the choice for a Freirean philosophy of education in the first place. Since this philosophy has not been implemented as a system-wide approach to education anywhere in the world, it could mean that it might seem “impossible” in South Africa. My response to this is that Freirean philosophy has been tried and tested in the mega world city of São Paulo, and in projects, organisations, institutes and institutions across the world – mostly in instances where the focus has been on the marginalised sectors of society. The challenge for South Africa is that too large a percentage of the population is found on the margins of society. Engaging with a Freirean philosophy of education and a pedagogy of hope that would address these communities specifically would indeed address some of the greatest challenges we face. I would argue further that no other education system has implemented such a philosophy and pedagogy because of the pressures of globalisation. Nowhere in the world has any country so boldly placed the needs of the poor and marginalised at the centre of its educational development. Freire provides us with the opportunity to do exactly that – while not in any way excluding any sector of society in the process by emphasising ontology and epistemology as philosophical approaches to education. These approaches are aware of power, are critical and desocialising, and have a focus on self-organisation and self-education. At the same time, this philosophy adheres to the following values: participatory, situated, critical, democratic, dialogical, multicultural, research-orientated, activist and affective.

A pedagogy of hope further provides the opportunity for education to contribute to the national project of reconciliation and unity in diversity, bringing together the previous oppressors and oppressed in a combined pedagogy – one agenda for both the advantaged and disadvantaged. Any differentiated philosophical approach to education would continue to play into the hands of the apartheid engineering of education and fundamental pedagogics, only now based not so obviously on race, but rather on socio-economic status.

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