Engaged Pedagogy and Performative Teaching: Examples from Teaching Practice

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ABSTRACT Effective and engaged teaching practices are those that recognise the importance of making real world connections between the subject material taught, and the students' experiences, through 'engaged' teaching and working to encourage the student to become reflexive and critical thinking societal participants. It is argued that meaningful teaching *praxis* or engaged pedagogy emanates from a teaching philosophy that is driven by the belief that both teaching and learning are collaborative processes between the teacher and the student group. By drawing on experiences of teaching a large first year university Anthropology class (>550) and a smaller third year Anthropology class (<90), the paper argues that one can use 'performative teaching' and 'performance' teaching as a praxis of 'engaged pedagogy'. It is argued that such an approach assists in creating a classroom culture that is sufficiently structured in that it allows one to guide learning of the curricular material, while still being flexible enough to allow the class to follow the contours of a discussion that is organically prompted within the class. Such an engaged pedagogy, the paper attempts to show, can articulate through replicable performative teaching practices[1].

INTRODUCTION

To teach is to engage students in learning; thus teaching consists of getting students involved in the active construction of knowledge . . .The aim of teaching is not only to transmit information, but also to transform students from passive recipients of other people's knowledge into active constructors of their own and others' knowledge. . . (David and Sweet 1991: 165).

This paper introduces a discussion on the theoretical notion of 'engaged pedagogy' and works with examples of 'engaged pedagogy' in the context of particular teaching practices that speak to such an approach. The paper adds to the work of writers such as Peterson (2009), Madge et al. (2009), Moen (2010) and Chahine (2013). These lineage of writers all draw, as does the researcher, on the foundational work of the feminist writer bell hooks; her framework of 'teaching to transgress' (hooks 1994) and her discussion and conceptualisation of an *engaged pedagogy* (see also later work by Smith et al. 2005). Such an engaged pedagogy, bell hooks argues, allows the students in the classrooms to be naturally facilitated into involving themselves with real world issues within their own identifiable and meaningful cultural contexts. '*Engaged'* pedagogy is also used here in the sense of a problematic approach to teaching and learning that does not compromise curriculum coherence, and yet lends itself to problem based or situational and responsive issue driven teaching. While Murphy (2010) looks at engaged pedagogy in the context of cultivating active citizenship within students, Madge et al. (2009) probe the notion of responsibility and responsible teaching within a framework of engaged pedagogy. Moen (2008), Peterson (2009) and Chahine (2013) likewise wrestle with engaged teaching and engendering social change and instilling the ability (in the student) to question the status quo. Engaged pedagogy, it is held, offers a strong theoretical scaffold for creative and embodied teaching techniques.

Madge et al. state that;

Teaching techniques can be critically reimagined to include an experiential learning pedagogy... also the idea that learning is something that is done to you, given to you, rather than something you co-create and exchange in a consciousness-raising process that involves literacy, reading, writing, action, reflection, self-awareness, relationship building, and reciprocity (Madge et al. 2009: 43).

This paper attempts to further the discussion on 'engaged teaching' by presenting examples of what is seen as replicable teaching practices that are based on such a pedagogical approach. The paper is divided into two parts. The

first part presents a particular teaching philosophy that is rooted in the theoretical elements of an engaged pedagogy. The second part presents examples (in both large and small classrooms) of a performative and 'performance' teaching that serve as examples of a replicable praxis in classrooms.

A TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Teaching is a dialectic relationship and an attempt at a 'sustained dialogue' between self (teacher) and environment (student group). Given this positioning, the objective becomes about teaching the students how to begin having this conversation beyond the class confines, and, to push the students into analysing their own experiences. Teaching practices linked to such a philosophy recognise the importance of making real world connections between the subject material taught and student experiences, and to encourage the student to become thinking societal participants. Real world connections in this instance should, through the content and structure of the various modules taught, and indeed the manner in which the modules are taught, aim to 'plug' the student into contemporary global, and most importantly, *local* contexts. It is important, as McWilliam and Dawson (2008: 638) state, for "students to be 'plugged into' and mindful of a 'local neighbourhood' and a larger world".

Such a teaching *praxis* or pedagogy thus emanates from a particular teaching philosophy, and is driven by the belief that both teaching and learning are collaborative processes between the teacher and the student group. At both the undergraduate levels and postgraduate levels, teaching ought to be a dynamic process entailing evolving a teaching and learning framework where the sharing of conceptual, theoretical and methodological material is meant to take place. This is also a recognition that one of the many challenges in tertiary teaching, more especially for the South African context, (which is the researcher's geo-political location) is *not* 'covering' (that is, merely teaching) the material to the students; it is the 'uncovering' (that is, the act and art of learning) the material with the students (see Smith et al. 2005) so that they are ushered into their own ongoing 'engaged' learning. What this means in material and pedagogical terms is that there is less content taught, and rather, much more conceptual *engagement* with

the theoretical and empirical content contained within the module.

Thus the imperative in teaching is to facilitate the students in developing reasoning skills necessary for successful careers and for sustaining intellectual growth long after they have left the university. This kind of teaching is far removed from a mechanistic understanding of education. And it is this kind of teaching that empowers the students to begin to see themselves as generators of knowledge, able to intellectually confront local societal and gender challenges.

Such a teaching philosophy (and resulting praxis) works on tiered levels. On the one hand is a particular understanding of teaching and learning, and of 'knowledge' itself, as being situational and contextual, that is, teaching that is aware of its ideological and pedagogical 'location'. On the other hand, is the understanding that students come from diverse educational backgrounds, that is itself symptomatic of a historically stratified access to educational training and educational opportunity. Thus the imperative is to be culturally and pedagogically attentive to the differential needs of students entering higher education. Responsible and inclusive teaching has thus to be attentive to wider historical realities and socio-political mechanisms under which secondary education with the former apartheid South Africa was structured, and is now repositioned.

The teacher's responsibility is to create a democratic classroom culture that is sufficiently structured for the learning of the course material, while still being flexible enough to allow each class to follow the contours of the discussion of concepts and theories that are spontaneously provoked within the class. Teachers need to see themselves as active learners who co-construct their understandings. Many learning theories themselves are constructivist in nature, and view learners as active participants in the learning process. Moen's (2008: 146) point that students "need to be given the opportunity to broaden their own perspectives and bring in examples from their everyday lives to relate to the issue under discussion" is deceptively simple, in as much as it is critically important. This is also especially vital given the varied demographic personality of the students in the classes. As such, these classes need to be approached as sites of learning and cultural negotiation sensitive to one's location.

Moen goes on to add;

The crucial issue here is to turn classrooms into places where the accepted canons of knowledge can be challenged and questioned, their construction seen not as a process of discovering universal and inevitable truths but rather as a very particular process of knowledge formation and truth claims. Critical/engaged pedagogy should seek not only to critique forms of knowledge but also to work towards the creation of new forms. By opposing knowledge as it is canonized in school subjects and academic disciplines, by making the everyday and the particular (that is, student culture and knowledge) part of a school curriculum, and by developing forms of critical analysis, it should be possible to encourage the emergence of alternative forms of culture, knowledge, and interpretation of social phenomena (Moen 2008: 141).

Teaching university classes in turn calls for a particular king of engaged pedagogy that embraces not only 'performative' teaching (hooks 1994) but also what the researcher refers to as 'performative *elements'* within teaching, or *performance teaching*. These examples are presented as empirical references for creating a potentially "replicable pedagogical environment for creative learning outcomes" (McWilliam and Dawson 2008: 634).

TEACHING LARGE CLASSES: 'PERFORMANCE' TEACHING

The researcher turns now to the empirical example of teaching the large first year and smaller third year classes entitled; Anthropology 102: *Culture and Society in Africa* (ANTH 102) and Anthropology 301: *Applied Anthropology (Human Rights and Organ Trafficking)* (ANTH 301). These modules were first taught in 2007/2008 (ANTH 102), and in 2008/2009/2012 (ANTH 301) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in the KwaZulu-Natal Province in South Africa, where the first year classes have annually numbered around 600-700 students.

As examples of performance teaching, are cited certain 'performance teaching' acts. The examples offer a window into how teaching and learning was designed in this particular large class context. The teaching praxis was cognisant of being situational and relevant, as well as attempting to deconstruct what is a conventional lecture mode format. While the lecture mode of teaching has its merits, especially in allowing material to be disseminated to large numbers and on some levels allowing collective engagement, it is also austere in its non- participatory structure as education research has shown. In the rather provocatively titled work *'Teaching with your Mouth Shut',* Finkel (2000) asserts that what is transmitted to students through lecturing is not retained for any sustained period. In addition, large, lecture classes create a distance between the teachers and students where the teachers do not know their students, students feel little sense of responsibility or accountability in class, and students do not retain the content of the lecture (see also Cooper and Robinson 2002). Furthermore, lecture mode classes are not always effective in fostering knowledge transfer to new situations, critical thinking and motivation for further learning.

Cognisant of all of the above, the researcher structured the module, *Culture and Society in Africa* to dovetail into a research project in Palaeo-heritage and the creation of 'African identities'. It was a year (2007) when new palaeo-fossils had been unearthed in the archaeological sites of Sterkfontein (a World Heritage Site) in the Gauteng province. The recent finds had put South Africa, and local archaeological research back onto the global map. The then State president Thabo Mbeki had co-opted the fossil finds at the site into his African renaissance discourse, reminding the world of scholars and lay alike, that humanity and the beginnings of the human race could be traced back to Southern Africa as the 'cradle of humankind'. The African Renaissance was about reclaiming and resituating the African identity back within a global context in reaction to decades of colonial subjugation and control[1].

Historically the curriculum of ANTH 102 was an introductory level anthropology class and was populated with content and material that introduced the first year anthropology students to constructed categories of 'race', 'tribe', and 'ethnicity'. The material and readings of the module was however, restructured within the course, and the critical concepts of race, ethnicity etc., were re-constituted within a (situational and relevant) discourse of palaeo and fossil heritage and identity. These critical concepts were in turn taught and raised for discussion through engaging performance acts that invited active

participation from the students (notwithstanding the large size of the class).

Each 'lecture' was opened with a quick 'whip' discussion session. In simple terms 'whip' refers to when a number of critical questions or thoughts relating to the work to be done in that particular period, would be written down on A4 paper, crumpled into a ball and thrown randomly to students across the class. The student who caught the 'ball' would open the sheet and engage with the question, quite often in a theatrical fashion, and in turn generate a new snowballed question that was again thrown randomly. In this fashion issues were creatively and enthusiastically '*whipped*' around the large class. The researcher's own embodied presence as teacher was maximised and all of the (large) lecture space was utilised, rather than merely the lecture podium space at the front of the class. Thus using the lapel mike to full advantage, as teacher, the researcher was able to have a 'felt presence' within the class and not remain locked to merely the front space. This meant that quite often teacher-student could co-enact in in quasi-theatrical fashion, any question or answer that might arise in class. This embodied irruption into the 'student space' further blurred lines between teacher and student at the critical points thereby creating space and opportunity for collaborative learning.

Such a method invited the participation of students beyond merely listening and taking down notes. It also notionally and visibly *shrank* the class. The researcher was able, through this technique to reach the students (within a class of over 500) who were even positioned at the very back of the lecture hall. Students who caught the 'ball' were also encouraged to throw the crumpled paper *behind them*, in that way the researcher was able to (literally *stretch* the teaching) and reach all the way up to the top and back of the room. This method 'shrunk' the size of the lecture hall, and functioned as a way to '*reorder*' in a sense, what would otherwise have been a conventional lecture mode of lesson delivery.

The students would also, during the course of the unfolding lectures, be brought to the front of the large lecture hall when issues of racial constructs and identity markers were being taught. Students were asked to *perform* their understandings of race and identity markers, and these performances were then deconstructed in discussion. Often students would take their cue from an enactment of the teacher, or co-enact *with* the teacher. In this way, the students were made aware that this was a 'safe space' and that they were not being asked to do anything that the teacher was not herself prepared to attempt. Winners who best *modelled* their understandings were nominated and small token awards were made. This was the pattern for much of the module. Both the 'whip' method and the normatively positioned 'modelling' or identity maker 'enactments' of racial/ethnic constructions allowed the researcher to begin the class with a heightened sense of expectation and readiness for the students to delve deeper, and possibly, challenge themselves with the ideas that the material offered.

The 'performance' teaching and learning was extended through the kind of module resources offered to the student. As the course dealt with constructed (and *deconstructed*) notions of 'ethnicity' and 'identity', a specialist guest speaker, the South African palaeo-anthropologist Professor Francis Thackeray, anthropologist and the then curator of the Transvaal Museum, was invited from Gauteng. He brought with him scientifically scaled fossil replicas of early human and human 'culture' and further invited lively discussions around notions of prehistoric, colonial and contemporary African identities. The talk itself was meant to have the students *connect* with the issues in the module, but beyond the confines of the class and with outside practitioners such as the palaeo-anthropologist, Professor Thackeray.

His visit was advertised through a novel poster especially designed for the module. A mini competition was held amongst the class from which the advertising poster was chosen. This generated great excitement and 'buzz' amongst the entire class. The winner was given a trophy which she, together with class relished.

The entire course/module was billed around a compulsory essay writing competition with a large first prize of R1000 (approximately $100) courtesy of the Science and Technology (SAASTA) grant that the researcher had received. The Essay (*Topic: The Bones Say we are All African*!) was a creative attempt at assessing the students' grasp of the material taught, and they were encouraged to write as creatively as the module itself had been taught, and to use poetry, rap and other alternate modes of *re*-communicating their understanding of, as well as

challenging, the material. Based on their winning entries, the three winners had to further develop a short enactment of their essay or rap/poetry in front of the class. This compulsory essay/rap/poetry/song competition took the place of the formative assessment of formal test and assignment.

It bears noting that the demographic make-up of the class was approximately 65 percent African students over the years the module was taught, with a substantial percentage being *isi*Zulu speaking students, students indigenous to the KwaZulu-Natal province. As these were first year 'entry' students, the discussions, together with salient theoretical and empirical background material on 'ethnos' and 'race', 'identity', 'heritage' and being '*African*', or being an *isi-*Zulu speaking African was experienced by them as challenging to the many cherished conceptions that they had tenaciously clung to for many years. bell hooks (1994, 2009) of course refers to this as 'transgressive teaching', where the teaching creates opportunity for the student to *transgress* previous preconceptions and undo pre-established thinking. Moen (2008: 140) points out that when we see schools and universities "not as sites where a neutral body of curricular knowledge" gets imparted, but rather as sites and spaces where "critical/engaged pedagogy" can take place, we begin to usher in deeper processes of learning. For Moen (2008: 141) such a teaching space in turn becomes a "cultural and political arena where different cultural, ideological, and social constructs are constantly in struggle". This echoes Madge et al. (2009: 43) who expound on the concept of 'knowledge in use' which holds that the "active constructions of knowledge are needed as vehicles for the development of learning". Feedback from the students indicated that they experienced it as somewhat less threatening to engage in critiquing and re-thinking concepts fundamental to their self-identity (race, ethnic group etc) through a performative mode, that is, enacting or writing a rap or creatively constructed essay that interrogated cherished notions of race etc. They were able to 'transgress' what they *thought* they knew and create opportunity for learning, in a manner that did not threaten who they felt they were (*African* or *South African* or *who* exactly was an *African* etc.), and see through to the constructed-ness of the categories within a particular historical and neo-colonial context.

Teaching: Smaller Third Year Classes

The smaller third year Anthropology (ANTH 301) class had the researcher revert to more experiential teaching. Much of the self reflection tasks and engaged critical thinking through problematic issue driven teaching could now return to the smaller classroom as 'engaged and sustained dialogue led teaching' between student and teacher.

Putnam and Borko (1997: 1225) advocate that teachers should be seen as 'active learners', and as active participants in the learning process. Such teaching is seen as exploring ways of understanding from particular perspectives and about exploring conceptual change. The third year classes, which in the last few years have numbered under 90 students, lent themselves to more dynamic and interactive engagements and student led discussions. The module entitled, *'Applied Anthropology* was again (re)positioned to be situational and context specific, and was thus designed in the context of *'Human Rights and Organ Trafficking'*. The curriculum of the module was structured and teaching material further located within an African discourse of so called *muti* or African medicine murders. These are ritualised killings within certain segments of the community where it is culturally understood that the organs of the ritually killed/ sacrificed individual could be used to cure certain ailments or effect magic and sorcery over individuals. Such ritual killings were of course illegal and considered inhumane within the South African context. However, their occurrence, and the beliefs around the social phenomena, persisted amongst rural communities. This was a social reality that the students could identify with, unlike for example, the rampant illegal kidney trade so common in European and Asian contexts. The discussions on organ trafficking and 'muti' thus always drew strong critical reactions and responses from the students. The students were in turn prompted to further investigate concepts of human dignity and constitutional rights within African paradigms and understandings of individual and group rights.

Discussion sessions (given that these are smaller classes) were structured to be lively and active. Current newspaper and magazine articles and internet images were further used to trigger and provoke response, discussion and most

importantly, embodied enactments and staging of the news events. Many short video documentaries, relevant to the experiences of the students, were in turn integrated into the teaching to stimulate discussion.

Again the 'whip' method was used to have the students write down provocative discussion threads/questions on a piece of 'balled' up paper and randomly thrown into the class. The student catching the 'ball' had to un-wrap the question (literally), and further *'unwrap'* and unpack his/her response to the initiated discussion. As the classes were small, this helped more quickly construct an egalitarian learning space where students (even the quieter and shy ones) were prompted into contributing in an organic manner, where *they* were in control of how the discussion developed. This speaks to a feminist pedagogy of equalising the power between teacher and student and contributing to a creative learning space that further attests to the students' enjoyment of the lively classes.

There were also quite emphatically *no* blueprint answers, or one normative answer of what was accepted as being 'correct', and the students were made aware of this. Students were made clear that the point of such a teaching praxis was meant for them to *grapple* with the issues raised, in terms of their own perspectives and understandings against the landscape of the material taught. These sessions generated lively discussions and oral contributions from the students. The discussions in turn assisted me in building an evolving profile of the class' understanding of the module on a daily and weekly basis over the course of the module.

Perhaps the aspect most enjoyed by the class was the weekly enactment sessions. Here groups were tasked to script and enact short scenes involving human rights issues using material from class readings and discussion. They were allowed to bring in 'cultural props' or creative artefacts to incorporate within their performances. These performances around human rights issues were deconstructed by the class in terms of their own frames of references and their own situated experiences as students living within South Africa. Such an approach, it is believed, is grounded in socio-cultural theories of learning that contend that human development is founded upon social interaction in cultural practices that are mediated by the use of creative cultural artefacts and tools (Olson and Clark 2009: 216).

In these instances student feedback indicated a highly positive response for the kind of teaching and learning that took place in the classes[22]

It bears noting that the conscious delimited focus of this paper was on praxis. To this end responses regarding the teaching and learning experience in the class were gathered in the form of a survey questionnaire and interviews. It is recognised however, that a qualitative and quantitative analysis of those responses as well as a quantitatively structured study into gauging student responses against student outcomes of examination results, are potentially rich avenues for future follow up research.

Replicable Practices and the Theoretical Framework of Engaged Pedagogy

The approach to teaching and teaching praxis sketched in the paper is not without theoretical and practical antecedents. bell hooks (1994) described teaching as a performative act which offers most readily spaces to enact change, and shifts that can enhance the students as human beings. Likewise, in her ground breaking essay almost two decades ago, *'Teaching Is Performance: Reconceptualising a Problematic Metaphor'* (1994), Elyse Lamm Pineau, who is an associate professor in the Department of Speech Communication at Southern Illinois University, makes the connections between performance and pedagogy in the areas of instructional narrative, and critical pedagogy. Pineau (1994: 111) illustrates that the locus of power in performative pedagogy, in both classroom practices and pedagogical theory, is capable of further 'flattening' power differentials between teacher and student, and flattening boundaries between the vital social and educational contexts. It is a critical pedagogy that attempts to re-inscribe differences in power, to help create a more democratic and emancipatory classroom environment.

The performative aspect of teaching compels one to engage 'audiences', in other words the students. Although a challenge in large (and noisy!) classes, these alternate approaches are possible if we were to eliminate the need for students having to take down large chunks of notes, and spend that time inviting the students to engage with the visual material presented, and with a discussion of concepts raised through innovative performative or performance teaching acts. Performative practices reference a *'doing'*

that takes place in the construction of classroom knowledge. Louis (2002: 101) points out that performative pedagogy concerns the action taken within the classroom to construct knowledge and the contingent process that such actions invoke, rather than (merely) the dramatic or performative manner in which information is stated. The 'performative' and 'performance' within performative pedagogy is thus claimed as marking education as, both, a process of *doing* (of creating knowledge) and the embodied, performance-inspired *means* by which such doing occurs (by the teacher).

Louis (2002) spells out a clear description of approaches to performative, and performance based pedagogy within the wider social science subjects; asserting that the performative mode allows for teachers and students alike to consider how their lives are constructed via ongoing, embodied, performative practices. Louis also points out that a performative mode of engagement uses classroom methods that privilege and engage the socio-historically contingent bodies of participants (students *and* teachers) in the classroom (Louis 2002: 106).

The pedagogical significance of performative teaching and performance teaching needs additionally to be contextualised within recent shifts in scholarly attention-away from traditional lecture mode teaching, to more innovative ways of engaged teaching and *deep* learning. *Deep learners* it is said (Marton and Saljo 1976), read for overall understanding and meaning while *surface learners* focus on stand-alone, disconnected facts and rote memorization. The praxis of engaged pedagogy for deep learning, is itself cast against a particular philosophy of teaching and learning as being a dialectic relationship between student and teacher, and attempting to make real world connections. By working through the examples of teaching within the two anthropology modules as "purposeful reflective practice" (Kane et al. 2004: 284) the paper attempted to show how creative teaching and (deep) learning spaces through creative and embodied teaching can be engendered. It is believed that such creative spaces also opens up a potential theoretical space for responding to the limits and theoretical impasses that exist in contemporary visions of (a positivistic) pedagogy.

A relatively high number of academics see themselves as experts in their discipline and hold canonised content-oriented conceptions of teaching. As Kember asserts, it can then be difficult to persuade them to adopt forms of teaching incorporating active student engagement, "even though there is evidence for the effectiveness of such forms of learning" (Kember 2009: 1). Signature pedagogies (see Gurung et al. 2009) that is, 'disciplinary habits of teaching, while important in some respects, can also be restrictive and limiting, especially within multiple classroom dynamics; large sizes, varied demographics, stratified and differentially empowered students coming in, etc. Thus, while we may well opt for such signature pedagogies in shaping *what* and *how* we teach and transmit knowledge and ways of thinking specific to our academic disciplines, we need to be even more cognisant of *who* we are teaching. What is needed (especially in the larger classes) is thus a more innovative lecturing format that is capable of allowing collective engagement. While signature pedagogies present vital insights from disciplinary teaching habits, it is just as vital, '*to break' with habit*, in order to generate new and rich ways of 'doing teaching' which may challenge the "traditional understandings that are in evidence in the work of academic teachers" (McWilliam and Dawson 2008: 638).We are reminded of Koestler's (1994: 96) wonderful definition of creativity as 'the defeat of habit by originality'!

Applied to the classroom, Ross McKeehen Louis (2002: 110) points out that performative play disrupts traditional pedagogical practices by privileging experimentation, innovation, critique, and subversion. Louis further claims, quite rightly, that a performative pedagogy (Louis 2002: 109) further recognizes the processual tendency within the classroom. As a process, one can recognise that so too, pedagogy should unfold and respond to the needs of the students.

Lessinger (1979: 4) asserted some time ago, that teaching is an act of performance; asserting that in order to be a better teacher, one must first become a better performer. When one casts one's mind back to the kind of lessons and teachers, best remembered in terms of the meaningfulness of the teaching and material taught, one cannot but agree. In this kind of pedagogy, teachers are more likely to be successful because they use performance to generate an emotional environment in which students acquire knowledge through the expression of feeling, as opposed

to only cognitive assimilation. Rocklin (1990: 153) writing more than a decade after Lessinger, also called for teachers to opt for performance as a teaching methodology because it pushes students to participate in a dramatic experience that might reactivate a natural sense of curiosity, energy, and hunger for learning that many secondary level school systems so effectively teach to suppress. Recognising that an important difference between theatre and education lay in the role of the respective audiences, Louis Rubin reminded us that the student is a co-performer rather than a vicarious onlooker (Rubin 1985: 116). This 'respective audience' as the student and co-performer-should be seen, as Chahine (2013: 23-24) informs us, "as whole human beings with complex lives and experiences rather than simply as seekers after compartmentalised bits of knowledge."

All of the writers referred to, one confesses, are scholars from some time ago. However, their assertions hold potency and value in current teaching and critical pedagogical approaches. What they appear to be describing, are the nuances of an engaged and critical pedagogy. The implementation of engaged pedagogy fosters critical thinking skills and the ability to develop one's knowledge (for the teacher/lecturer) according to the perspective of others (students). This approach is what bell hooks (2009: 10) calls "radical openness". Teachers can thus elicit more from their students than a mere mechanical regurgitation of material. There is a need to militate against the potential "fear of not covering enough material" which may well restrict us in terms of what we offer in our teaching instead of letting and trusting the "the mood of the class" in deciding how and what to do next (see Chahine 2013: 25). Granted this fear is possibly more realistically confronted in smaller classrooms where the numbers are still manageable for such an organic feedback from the students themselves. It is more challenging in larger classrooms, but not impossible.

One adds though, that the success of engaged pedagogy (in large or small classrooms) is contingent upon both parties' (student's and the teacher's) willingness to participate in critical thinking and reciprocal interaction (hooks 1985: 19). *Performative pedagogy within an engaged pedagogical context, supplants "information-dispensing" with the negotiation and enactment of possible knowledge claims. 'Per-*

formance' reframes the whole educational enterprise as an ongoing ensemble of narratives and performance, rather than a linear accumulation of isolated, discipline-specific competencies (Pineau 1994: 10) and points well beyond any impoverished sense of performance which diminishes the complexity of educational interactions. Performative pedagogy concerns the action taken within the classroom to co-construct knowledge and the contingent process that such action invokes, rather than the dramatic manner in which information is stated (see Louis 2002: 101). Performative pedagogy also operates as a contested concept, in part because of the wide appropriation of performance into classroom practices and theorising. Both these attributes however, enrich performative pedagogy as they insure the possibility for re-invention and debate in the classroom practices of educators (Louis 2002: 101).

There is at present a platform of scholarship that is making it possible to foster creative teaching and learning (see Lima et al. 2002; Smith et al. 2005; Browne 2005; Madge 2009; Murphy 2010; Berry 2010; Danowitz and Tuitt 2011). Moreover, discussions of performance and pedagogy (as the above writers illustrate) need not be confined to a single academic discipline. Varied applications of performance to pedagogical theory and practice emerge from varied disciplines. Performative pedagogy speaks to a particular degree of corporeal performance, and performative pedagogy emerges from scholarly concern with process and embodied action (Louis 2002: 100). This framework helps to "unsettle the binaries between taught and teacher" and the "liminalities of the boundaries" (Madge et al. 2009: 43) between teacher and student, without surrendering the incumbent responsibilities of either category.

Significant within this kind of effective pedagogy is the contention by McWilliam and Dawson (2008: 637) that it is the community, not the individual that is the unit of analysis into how creativity gets fostered (see also Perterson 2009; Murphy 2010). According to these scholars, the creative process with education and the teaching in classrooms at tertiary level, is complex, including as it does the cultural order (domain) and the social order (field) which interact, and within which humans interact. According to them, it is at the knitted intersection of these interactions that creative enterprise emerges.

McWilliam and Dawson (2008: 638) give us the cogent reminder that there is much that "militates" against the 'emergence' of such "creative capital" from higher education learning environments, *as they currently exist*. They point to what they see as the resilience of the 'lecture', the ubiquitous culture of one dimensional 'transmission' of information and "the hard-wiring of disciplinary boundaries" (McWilliam and Dawson 2008: 638), as some of the restrictive factors. All of this needs to be interrogated for further development in engaged teaching and learning, *for both student and teacher.*

CONCLUSION

The examples of 'performance teaching' that have been presented, it is contended, offer insights, crucial for rethinking the epistemological premises of an effective and creative pedagogy. They are not blind however, to the complexities and challenges involved in such a pedagogical shift. However, it is held that engaged pedagogy offers a rich and valuable theoretical scaffold for supporting the framework of performative and performance teaching that is able to foster an emotional as well as a cognitive environment for collaborative learning. Within the teaching and learning context, the (potential) interactive collaborative space is the classroom. However, this potential is more fully actualised within innovative creative teaching (such as performance teaching), which allows for students to make real world local and global connections with what is taught.

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