

The Implementation of Difficult Dialogues™ toward Transformation in Higher Education, South Africa: Problematic and Potentialities

Tania Rauch van der Merwe*, Shirley du Plooy and Motsaathebe Serekoane

University of the Free State, South Africa

**E-mail: vdmRauchT@ufs.ac.za*

KEYWORDS Critical Analysis. Critical Theoretical Grounding. Historical *A Priori*. Instrumentalization of Knowledge. Pedagogy

ABSTRACT Difficult Dialogues™, an initiative that seeks to cultivate democratic discourse in higher education, was offered as a teaching approach to lecturers at a historically white Higher Education Institution in South Africa (SA), which, similar to other higher education institutions, bears the brunt of the residual effects of apartheid and its concomitant challenges in the 21-year old democracy. An argument is made that Difficult Dialogues™ needs to be located theoretically within the academic landscape of higher education, positioning it within the nature of universities in SA, grounded by a critical theoretical approach that seeks to promote social justice and responsible citizenship in higher education and moreover; as a pedagogical tool. This contextualisation of Difficult Dialogues™ and overt communication thereof to lecturers, are put forward as essential for its entrenchment as daily practice in lecture rooms, as well as countering the *zeitgeist* ideology within Higher Education of the instrumentalization of knowledge.