

Becoming Knowledge Makers: Critical Reflections on Enquiry-Based Learning

Gideon Nomdo

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4878-9349>
University of Cape Town, South Africa
Gideon.Nomdo@uct.ac.za

Aditi Hunma

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7714-2996>
University of Cape Town, South Africa
Aditi.Hunma@uct.ac.za

Sean Samson

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5496-8672>
University of Cape Town, South Africa
Sp.Samson@uct.ac.za

Abstract

The scholarship of teaching and learning recognises the important interrelationship between teaching and learning, and it values critical dialogues on teaching-learning praxis beyond local contexts. This focus shifts attention from research outputs drawing on student behaviour to a broader focus on teacher-learner mutuality, disciplinary practices, and institutional landscapes. Rapid changes in higher education require the fostering of critical citizenship as a core graduate attribute. The massification of education, however, has emphasised throughput at the expense of nurturing students' sense of "becoming" as they navigate transformations in selfhood. This represents a stumbling block for meaningful participation in their own learning. Our article explores the incorporation of enquiry-based learning within a flipped blended classroom setting that seeks to engage teachers and learners more reflectively as co-producers of knowledge. We show how this approach can nurture an awareness of the self through the process of "becoming". We employ a qualitative case-study methodology to interrogate data taken from student writings, interviews, and course evaluations. Our analysis traces the progression of developmental insights present in students' reflective thinking and writing about their learning. We conclude that the process of "becoming" is possible within an educational context focused on measurable outcomes, where "becoming" is intricately linked to pedagogical imperatives seeking to empower, transform and enrich learning.

UNISA



the doj & cd
Department
Justice and Constitutional Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Education as Change

<https://upjournals.co.za/index.php/EAC>

Volume 25 | 2021 | #8996 | 21 pages

<https://doi.org/10.25159/1947-9417/8996>

ISSN 1947-9417 (Online)

© The Author(s) 2021



Published by the University of Johannesburg and Unisa Press. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)

Keywords: knowledge producers; agency; being; becoming; enquiry-based learning; reflective practice, assemblage; intra-action

Introduction

In a South African higher education (HE) context fraught with inequalities, the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) invites educators to reflect on how their teaching impacts social change. The South African student-led Fallist movement of 2015 with its calls to decolonise higher education (see Ahmed 2019; Lishivha 2019) highlighted how funding, dominant knowledge systems and institutional culture represent barriers to access and success. The Fallist movement provided much impetus for reflection on curricula, in our opinion, yet may have downplayed the view of curriculum as dynamic and realised through pedagogy (see Mkhize 2015).

Since the Extended Curriculum Programme (ECP)¹ specifically addresses social inequalities through education, ECP lecturers are often described as teachers rather than researchers, creating an artificial divide between the two roles. However, the process of introspection and scholarship is even more necessary to continue refining our offerings for widening access and promoting student success in terms of epistemology, belonging, and social consciousness.

Our philosophy draws on an enriched pedagogy that moves away from a deficit approach (possibly mistranslated from policy) that describes ECP students as “beneficiaries”, and instead shifts focus to teaching practices that serve all students and highlights the affordances and constraints of our working contexts. The digital turn has invited us as ECP lecturers to explore the potential of scaling up our offerings through courses we design and teach.² The shift in focus to a critical reflection on pedagogy and context aims to develop teaching practice more broadly and is in line with the focus of evolving scholarship. Simultaneously, it is also a reconfiguring of ECP scholarship, informing the field of HE through supporting *all* students. Our ethos is very much aligned with Boyer (1990, 16):

We believe the time has come to move beyond the tired old “teaching versus research” debate and give the familiar and honourable term “scholarship” a broader, more capacious meaning, one that brings legitimacy to the full scope of academic work. ... [T]he work of the scholar also means stepping back from one’s investigation, looking

¹ This is a four-year programme offering additional support to students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds identified as having potential to succeed at university. Though tied by a common history, the student cohort is heterogeneous, given differences in schooling and socio-economic standing. The state-funded programme operates under the banner of social transformation to redress the wrongs of apartheid’s Bantu education system. It may share some similarities with the United Kingdom’s “Widening access” programme.

² Our Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), called Writing Your World: Finding Yourself in the Academic Space, is one such offering to students globally, and is currently taken by about 13,000 learners of all ages, professions and nationalities.

for connections, building bridges between theory and practice, and communicating one's knowledge effectively to students.

This article is one moment in a longer process of reflection on our teaching practices and research journey in SoTL. We have examined how our approach fosters deeper learning engagement by holding students in what we have called the “analytical mode” (see Arend et al. 2017). In this mode, messiness is welcomed, and students grapple with ideas without being held accountable for them, enabling a deep, invested process of meaning-making. Our most recent ECP enquiries include adopting an ethics of care approach (Samson et al. 2018) and discovering “the envisioned self”, which relates to students’ sense of becoming (Hunma et al. 2019).

Our article traces the design and implementation of an evidence-based learning (EBL) approach (see Healey 2005) in a first-year level African Studies (AXL) course, Writing Across Borders, offered by ECP staff to Humanities students at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Here, ECP students are not isolated from the other students, and the classroom comprises a diverse cohort of first to third year local and international students from mainstream and extended degrees. We believe that exposure to students in other streams contributes to enriching the learning experience. In fact, the divide is not productive, since ECP students *do* study with students in other streams, write the same essays, and at times, outperform those students. But we are mindful that ECP students are not a homogeneous group, and that ECP programmes are not uniform in terms of design and structure across faculties and institutions. The glue that holds all ECPs together, though, is the common goal of improving access and equity for historically disadvantaged students and the overall commitment to the decolonising project.

Our position as ECP staff is that all students have a repertoire of discourses and experiences they carry into the university, but that they require the space to grapple with ways of negotiating these brought-along and newly encountered epistemologies and discourses. This negotiation enables them to meet the requirements for achieving milestones in their academic journeys. A significant milestone is the transition from first to second year, where students are expected to develop researcher identities. This was confirmed through qualitative research we conducted in 2018 across 10 Humanities departments with second-year students, course convenors and tutors, where participants reported that second-year students struggled predominantly with the skills of critical reading and research. We adopted a less bounded view of ECP by dissolving the boundaries that separated mainstream and extended programmes and strove to “extend” the reach of our offerings to *all* students. Offering our course as an elective in the African Studies Department made access to ECP and mainstream students in one course possible. We applied a transformative approach to language and academic literacy (Lillis and Scott 2007) with the aim of widening social and epistemic access to address the educational needs of all students, including the historically disadvantaged. This approach moves from the reflex that gaps in knowledge or “skills” can simply be solved

through the “development” of students, which in fact reinforces a deficit view of students.

Our course forms part of a “Curriculum Reform” project, and its design pays attention to issues of decolonisation at a curricular level in terms of transforming the teaching and learning space to equip students with the research skills required for second year. In the long run this could enable the university to increase its throughput and nurture requisite graduate attributes. It also speaks to UCT’s strategic goals of being a “research intensive university” and creating “social impact through engaged scholarship”. By opening the AXL course to mainstream and ECP students, we distance ourselves from the idea that students need to first assimilate knowledge to fit into the university community, and rather embrace the view that all students can be contributors of knowledge on the course.

The course’s location in African Studies influences what and how we teach so that we are in alignment with other courses in the discipline. Prominence is given to readings and case studies from the African continent. The content revolves around the themes of identity and migration and the question posed is: What happens to the identity of individuals as they cross borders? This is a question that students explore by stepping into the field and interviewing a refugee.³ Later they write up a report on their findings. The mode of enquiry undertaken by students is “research-based” (Healey 2005, 70).

The course pedagogy is driven by an evidence-based learning approach, which Spronken-Smith et al. (2008 quoted in Healey 2005, 70) define as “a pedagogy which best enables students to experience the processes of knowledge creation”. The fact that the lecturers are not privy to the research field, in that they do not set up, interact, or participate in the student interview process with the migrant interviewee, may give students more autonomy to construct meaning and take ownership of the knowledge produced.

Additionally, the content is structured in a “flipped classroom” blended mode that requires students to first engage with the material online, and then enter the physical classroom (which we have termed “Writers’ Circles” following the model of an organic postgraduate writing space) for discussion. While we offer anchor points, this model gives students more agency within the flexible course structure, where our role is that of nurturing and offering guidance and prompts. We adopt the role of critical observers of these students’ process of becoming, aware that this enquiry could also influence our own learning journey.

³ Students used the terms “refugee” and “migrant” interchangeably, and for the purposes of this article these terms will have the same meaning in terms of the issues of mobility, displacement and marginality.

Drawing on data from student blogs, essays, research projects, interviews, and course evaluations, we explored through a qualitative case-study methodology how the EBL model allowed students to build their own knowledge base and offered them a space to initiate their process of becoming. We ask: What does it mean to be a producer of knowledge? Do students see themselves as producers or reporters or receivers of knowledge? Who owns the knowledge? How can we use EBL for enabling students to take responsibility and ownership of their own learning? How can we draw on scholarship of teaching and learning debates to interrogate the binaries between producer/receiver, ECP and mainstream, and develop more nuanced understandings of “becoming”?

The sense of “becoming” employed here is borrowed mainly from Deleuze and Guattari (1987), and Massumi (2002) where the process of “becoming” involves a subject who is acted upon but who can also act and transform. In this respect, Bayat and Mitchell’s (2020) recent study on “affect” has been useful for visualising and thinking about what is entailed in the process of “becoming”. We argue that the process of “becoming” takes on new meanings for students driven by an enquiry process, and that alongside the dominant narrative of measurable outcomes, there is a slow and sustained form of student scholarship that endures beyond the temporal boundaries of the course and the spatial boundaries of the university. Such scholarship continues to inform students’ process of knowledge production and their “envisioned selves” as socially conscious beings. The uncertainty and relational trajectory characterising “becoming” find energy in enquiry-based approaches, which help to focus learning through the lens the student constructs (using material within and outside of the course boundaries).

This focus on the student’s sense of self and being has also pushed us to consider the processes of “becoming” at an individual level in the Heideggerian sense, to establish a more informed basis of how the boundaries that constitute different selves shift outwards, become porous and disappear altogether on the path to creating a more inclusive, equitable and harmonious state of existence within the world. Our proposition here is not to expose the dissonance in the ontological stances between Heidegger’s ([1927] 1962) and Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) frameworks (for more insight, see Allen 2015). Rather, we draw inspiration from Natanasabapathy and Maathuis-Smith’s (2019) study showing how intertwined the philosophical concepts of Heidegger’s (1927) notion of “being” and Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) notion of “becoming” are in transformative learning models (in our case, EBL). In line with such thinking, we wish to draw on and merge some of the insights and concepts arising out of Heideggerian and Deleuzian philosophical stances, to create new possibilities for a more informed understanding of the interrelatedness of the complexity in meaning that underlines the process of becoming. We deem this to be a more productive and collaborative stance in that our adoption of an EBL approach has resulted in our students oscillating between boundedness and fluidity. This process view is perhaps more valuable than an image of an end state or outcome. The outcome or future self is carried with students as they engage with their contexts, offering them “the potential capacity

to bring such futures about” (Carlin and Wallin 2014, xxii). Ultimately, students’ EBL journeys also inform our teaching approaches and curriculum design, such that students become partners with staff in contributing to the ongoing scholarship of teaching and learning.

Literature Review

The EBL model is instrumental to the ordering of teaching and learning moments or “literacy events” on the course. We discuss some of the key literature in EBL, as well as the processes of being and becoming.

Enquiry-Based Learning (EBL)

Spronken-Smith et al. (2008 quoted in Healey and Jenkins 2009, 25) describe evidence-based learning as “a pedagogy which best enables students to experience the processes of knowledge creation”. The AXL course is in line with such thinking about learning as an exploratory process and contains all the ingredients of EBL:

- learning stimulated by enquiry and based on a process of seeking knowledge and new understanding;
- a student-centred approach to teaching where teachers act as facilitators;
- a move to self-directed learning with students taking responsibility for their learning; and
- the development of skills in self-reflection.

In terms of the nature of the enquiry, the authors distinguish between three modes, namely, structured, guided, and open. Our course opted for a guided mode of enquiry that is “question driven” (see Roy, Kustra, and Borin 2003), and where students engage in a “self-directed” exploration to seek answers. Students were given the broad question of “What happens to identity as individuals move across borders?” During their group interviews with a refugee, students planned and posed questions relating to the main question, but also used the interview to identify and sharpen an angle that they wished to pursue on identity and migration. Some chose to shine a light on the themes of solidarity, others on survival and yet others on discrimination, othering, and identity crises.

EBL offers greater autonomy in the learning process and is linked to research. The research process can be set up by lecturers in different ways; it can adopt research-led, research-orientated, research-based, and research-tutored approaches (Healey 2005, 70). While the research-led and research-oriented approaches are often theoretical, the research-based and research-tutored approaches require students to be active participants in the research process. On the AXL course, these four components were

utilised, starting from orienting students to existing research on migration and identity, to offering guidelines on research methods and ethical considerations, to opening opportunities to conduct and write up research.

Our approach to EBL is also informed by Levy and Petrusis (2012, 97–98) who conclude that learning contexts where the tasks are “tightly structured” and where students are offered a level of “bounded independence” are more effective than those that are open-ended. In addition, Perkins (2010, 25) suggests letting students “play the whole game” rather than revealing aspects of the research process in a sequential or linear manner. The effects of this approach, we argue, may be felt during the course, but may also contribute to University of Cape Town’s (UCT’s) policies on cultivating critical minds and graduate attributes, including researcher identities. We argue that the process of becoming is not confined to the course, though we can explore key trends in students’ process of becoming as they reflect on their evolving sense of being through acts of knowledge-building.

Being

Heidegger ([1927] 1962)⁴ acknowledges that part of being human or *Dasein* (understood as a state of “Being” in the world—with a capitalised “B”) means having to live with angst and an awareness of one’s own mortality. Ontologically, “Dasein (Dasein: there-being)” indicates “the distinctive mode of Being realized by human beings” (Heidegger 1927 quoted in Wheeler 2013). Heidegger’s focus here is on the unique ability of humans to have an awareness of “Being” while maintaining the ability to reflect on the nature of that state of “Being” in terms of distinguishing between an authentic and inauthentic self. The authentic self is a self that is “my own”, it “is mine ... owned by me”. In contrast, the inauthentic self is “the fallen self, the self lost to the ‘they’” (Wheeler 2013), as in when an individual unquestioningly becomes a mere follower. Heidegger argues that by living in uncritical imitation of the “they”, the “inauthentic Dasein avoids owning its own life”. To be authentic means acting out a “resoluteness” whereby an individual chooses one of the “possible ways of being” made available in society (Wheeler 2013). Wheeler (2013) concludes that “authenticity is not about being isolated from others, but rather about finding a different way of relating to others” such that one does not follow blindly. Authenticity concerns a constant re-creation of an openness to different types of relationships, and this generates change in which new possibilities for becoming with others emerge.

Becoming

Dasein can be seen as a constant presence interacting with the process of becoming. Here “becoming” is dynamic and organic, constituted in and through inter- and intra-action. Stated otherwise, “being itself signifies a particular ontological presence at a

⁴ Wheeler’s (2013) analysis of Heidegger’s 1927 publication, *Being and Time*, which we draw on here, offers a good starting point for unpacking the meaning of *Dasein*. Also see Finkelde’s (2013) location of Heidegger in post-structuralism.

particular point in time, whereas becoming is a continuous moving presence of the ontological ... self” (Natanasabapathy and Maathuis-Smith 2019, 371). Through the process of “becoming-with others” (Bayat and Mitchell 2020, 72), new ways of being-in-the-world are actualised. Bayat and Mitchell (2020) provide insights into the affective dimensions of pedagogy. The authors (Bayat and Mitchell 2020, 63) foreground the Deleuzian understanding of “affect” defined as “a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another”, where “[a]ffect includes emotions and feelings but is not reduced to them”. The authors show how “an attunement to the affective forces circulating in pedagogical practices” represents a shift away from conventional teaching towards socially just practices that foreground “dialogic interactions between students and educators” (2020, 57) so that the social dimensions and contestations surrounding knowledge production are made visible. Within this dialogical setting, students cultivate “agential” qualities (more will be said about this later) (see Freire 2000) by developing critical awareness of the connections between theory and their lived realities. This dialogical process brings together students and educators in an ecosystem or an assemblage consisting of heterogeneous elements, which change and can also be changed (Massumi 2002). In this dialogical process, learning becomes a collaboration between lecturers and students that disturbs and flattens hierarchies of power embedded within normative pedagogies (Bayat and Mitchell 2020, 58), paving the way for the liberatory praxis inherent in socially just pedagogies and transformative curricula (see Bozalek and Zembylas 2017; Moletsane 2015).

Bayat and Mitchell (2020, 58; 60) assert that “pedagogies for social justice bring opportunities to engage with an awareness and sensitivity to the affective flows which facilitate students’ learning” and “open up multidirectional spaces for students to enter into new relations with different knowledges”. Instances of such “new relations” can be seen when our AXL students begin to reflect on the “single stories” (Adichie 2009) of the refugee/migrant that they hold. These constructions are placed alongside other (often competing) representations of migrants/refugees encountered on the AXL course, forming sites of *interrogation*, where meaning is negotiated. As lecturers we simply facilitate this unfolding process of interrogation: we work collaboratively with their ideas, questions, challenges, perceptions, reflections and silences, as a way of sharing and also co-producing new ideas that resonate with their (and our own) personal experiences of “Being” and “becoming”. We echo Barad’s (2007 quoted in Bayat and Mitchell 2020, 61) comment that:

As educators, we examined our teaching assemblages ... acknowledging that we were not in a neutral or innocent position to “enact what matters and what is excluded from mattering”.

In terms of making better sense of “what” matters in an assemblage, Bayat and Mitchell (2020, 62) argue that affective forces are *also* constituted in the relationships that humans develop with material objects (such as chairs, chalkboards, computers,

fieldnotes, voice recorders), which form part of the assemblage. These “heterogeneous” parts represent a dynamic system through the relations that are formed in the in-between spaces (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 35). These relational components produce a state of “agentic attunement”, which, according to Despret (2013 quoted in Bayat and Mitchell 2020, 64), “is never fixed once and for all” and makes power available to effect change in the assemblage.

Drawing on Barad’s (2007 cited in Bayat and Mitchell 2020) employment of “agential realism”, Bayat and Mitchell assert that objects also possess “agentic” qualities, and it is only their interaction with humans that enables the concept of agency to be meaningfully assessed. Individuals on their own have no “pre-existing” sense of agency to produce effects. Rather, such effects are the results of agentic qualities of “multiple bodies” interacting with one another, as in the case of an assemblage. Agency and affect are therefore socially constituted within and through these relationships, in other words “through the event of intra-action” (Barad quoted in Bayat and Mitchell 2020, 63). This is where learning takes place, where students are engaged in the “process of becoming-with other bodies that include space, time and matter”. Emerging from this dynamic of intra-action is the idea of “entanglements where ethics, ontology and knowledge are inseparable in our teaching and learning practices”, allowing for “alternative pedagogical opportunities of becoming that are constituted along a continuum of unthought possibilities with many different learning outcomes” (Bayat and Mitchell 2020, 63) to emerge. This sense of emergence is crucial since it signals movement from one state to another. Semetsky (2007 quoted in Natanasabapathy and Maathuis-Smith 2019, 373) captures this idea by drawing on Deleuzian philosophy to foreground transformative changes that occur in students’ thinking processes and points to “a shift in the rhizomatic paths between the ‘start of a course’ and the ‘end of a course’”. These shifts signify the intertwined nature of being and becoming:

[D]uring the course, the learner moves from one state of *being* to a state of *becoming*, which then becomes the present state of *being* from which the learner moves forward to become the next desired state of being. ... Transformative learning therefore is a cyclical process of *being* and *becoming*. ... [*B*]eing evolves continuously and eternally achieving various milestones in its journey. (Natanasabapathy and Maathuis-Smith 2019, 373)

Methodology

The study employs a qualitative case-study methodology, which enables researchers to “retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin 2009, 4) and relies on detailed interpretations of bounded phenomena (Dyson and Genishi 2005). However, according to Gallagher (2019, 1), conducting case studies online comes with its own challenges, since the “boundaries around what might constitute a case are murky and often ‘leaky’”. Students are operating across various contexts: the classroom, the online platform with its own subdivisions of conversational blogs and formal essays, and the research field where they interview a refugee. At the outset, the course offered theoretical tools and perspectives through the readings to orient students

to the focus on identity and mobility. It also gave students the opportunity to discuss, problematise and blog about their own identity, how they perceived themselves, how others perceived them, and the role of context in shaping their sense of being, before going into the field. These preliminary exercises served as a rehearsal space, a moment of anchoring before students set out to encounter the unknown terrain of research, what Levy and Petruilis (2012, 97–98) refer to as “bounded independence”. There was a co-ownership of the knowledge produced through the interview process, since students took responsibility for the dialogue that unfolded: they prepared and posed interview questions, made the necessary connections between responses, recorded, transcribed and analysed interview data and wrote it up as a research project. As lecturers we facilitated the analysis towards a consolidation of the knowledge gained. This process also destabilised the idea of lecturers as purveyors of knowledge, and instead rendered them as knowledge-receivers, as they had to rely on what students reported from the field. Here the interview and classroom spaces represented transformative learning sites and signalled the affective dimension of pedagogy in which the student narratives, presented below, underwent a “passage from one experiential state of the body to another” (Bayat and Mitchell 2020, 63).

Access to migrants/refugees was organised by the lecturers,⁵ and students were given a broad question to investigate, namely, “What happens to the identity of individuals as they move across borders?” The question was open-ended while still offering direction. The cases in this research were four students from the 2019 student cohort, purposively selected for diverse representation in terms of year of study and nationality. The data set included student blogs, research essays, the course evaluation, and a focus group interview. The data was analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis as defined by Fairclough (1995), focusing on the text, the interpersonal and social dimensions of meaning to bring out moments when students assume agency in the process of knowledge making. The comparison of findings across those moments brought out impressions about students’ journeys of becoming. The concepts that informed the analytical framework are “being”, “becoming” and “knowing”, which are configured in different ways to produce different types of knowledge makers. At this point, the extent to which students viewed themselves as knowledge makers still needed to be ascertained.

⁵ We liaised with UCT’s Refugee Law Clinic to gain access to participants.

Data Analysis

Sinazo⁶ and Bronwyn

Sinazo is a black South African⁷ citizen and second-year student majoring in Politics, Media and Writing. While doing the AXL course in 2019, she traced the shifts in her views on refugees and herself.

In her Week 9 blog, she imagined the prospect of interviewing a refugee and the power relations between them. She realised that her South African citizenship marked her as being different to the refugee, and might influence how she is viewed by refugees, particularly in light of the recent xenophobic attacks in the country. In the process, she inverted the gaze that often portrays refugees as “threats” to view herself as a “threat” from the gaze of the “other”. Aware of her positionality as a researcher, she resolved to make the interview “as comfortable and fair as possible”. This was an important moment in Sinazo’s process of becoming, where there was a conscious attempt at fostering familiarity with one who may have been ostracised in his homeland and then in the host country. Here, she exhibits a capacity for “assemblage thinking” (Bayat and Mitchell 2020), the understanding that she needs to strike a degree of “agentic attunement” and calibrate the unequal relations between her and the refugee, due to the refugee’s own precarious political identity and the researcher-researched expectations around data collection and representation.

In the Week 10 blog, Sinazo underwent a conceptual shift regarding refugees. Using the storytelling prompts we offered, she wrote, “Once upon a time, I thought that all refugees came to SA because they couldn’t afford to live in their home countries due to high inflation or corrupt leaders”. Here she admitted to constructing refugees’ identities in terms of the dominant narrative of victimhood. She then noted that her encounter with Hall’s concept of “push and pull factors” allowed her to escape the single story about refugees’ motivation to cross borders. Sinazo asserted that the contestation of the single story needs to happen through sensitising locals about the harm inflicted on refugees.

⁶ Participants in this study were given pseudonyms to protect their identities. This also formed part of the ethical considerations that informed this research.

⁷ The impact of apartheid ideology on the reconstructions of post-apartheid identities in South Africa means that the term “black” is used inclusively to signal African, coloured and Indian groups. The inclusive use of the term “black”, however, needs to be problematised since it continues to have different socio-political and economic connotations among previously designated apartheid “race” groups. In this article, we use the labels of “African” and “coloured” as designations of being “black” to indicate varied experiences of blackness in a democratic SA. We also use the term “white” to further differentiate students’ lived experiences. Under apartheid, “white” referred to those with European heritage; “African” signalled indigenous black African groupings; while the term “coloured” is popularly regarded as denoting those of “mixed race” and refers to a broad and culturally diverse social group descended from Cape slaves, indigenous Khoisan and European settlers.

Her realisation resonated with Bronwyn's⁸ admission about preconceived notions concerning migrants:

I created a single story about this migrant before I even met Mr J.L. ... Going into the interview I had preconceived ideas about ... my migrant. I imagined him to be a person who was illiterate and with no formal schooling ... a scared person who spoke little to no English. ... Upon entering the interview and meeting my migrant and hearing him speak I realised that my single story that I've created was wrong. ... He was not illiterate. In fact, he was brilliant. He had a Master's degree in Law. This links up with what Adichie said about single stories creating stereotypes and ... makes one story. ... There cannot only be one story because identity is multiple. ... I realised that I have ... generalised. ... I created a single story about the migrant. It implicated my mind because I was expecting him to be a certain way ... made assumptions of the types of answers I would get in my interview. (Bronwyn)

The actual interaction with the refugee is where students' agentic qualities surfaced as a product of the relationships between the interviewee, the student interviewers, and the inanimate objects (such as the positioning of tables and chairs, the use of pens, voice recorders and so forth), which made up part of the interview space. Agency here is produced within and through the interactions between the agentic qualities of the group. We find that new academic knowledge catalysed Sinazo's and Bronwyn's process of becoming, breaking the cycle that reinforced a single, negative narrative of migrants. The students encountered a refugee face to face, and a dynamic was created whereby the power hierarchy between students as privileged observers and recorders of knowledge versus refugees as marginal figures who are "acted" upon was disrupted. Here the refugees were the expert source of knowledge who invited students into sharing their lived experiences. Within this dialogical moment, students were learning first-hand what it means to be a refugee in South Africa. As an intra-action, the interview process illustrated a particular mode of learning that involved the "entanglements" of "ethics, ontology and knowledges" (Bayat and Mitchell 2020, 63). Students were exposed, without filter, to the anger, frustration, fear, and hope of refugee interviewees. The realness of it all literally stared them in the face and forced them to recognise and confront the discomfort of being a refugee, and this intersected with their own feelings of discomfort in response to what they encountered. It is this "coming together" of various agencies "which generates a subjective or emotional interpretation" (Hickey-Moody and Malins 2007 quoted in Bayat and Mitchell 2020, 63). By acknowledging the diversity in refugees'/migrants' narratives, Sinazo and Bronwyn opened the space for dialogue and the resonance of views and experiences. Upon their return from the

⁸ Bronwyn is a "coloured" ECP student, in her first year in 2019. The "racial diversity" among our research participants was coincidental, but we did aim for diversity in terms of levels of study and nationality. Our data shows that the traditional apartheid labels of "race" still tend to inform experiences of "being" and possibilities for "becoming" in South Africa, with a yearning now for something that is more inclusive. The sense of "becoming" that we note in the data is transcending the boundaries of racial categories towards some sense of common experience of humanity in relation to equity and social justice.

field, the familiar space of the classroom took on a new form by way of writers' circles. These circles privilege dialogue about what happened in the field and presented an opportunity to reconfigure the assemblage through the discussion of new ideas, which then took shape as insightful pieces of knowledge. The writers' circles built a community of enquirers that comprised students and lecturers who collaborated, rehearsed and co-constructed meaning out of fieldnotes. The students' realisations operated at a theoretical and affective level, where a process of "becoming-with others" (Bayat and Mitchell 2020) unfolded through new ways of knowing and attempts at re-discovering the self and the other.

In Sinazo's research essay she made a conscious effort to emphasise her participant's ingenuity and prowess to survive amid daily struggles to be accepted on one hand and attempts to escape persecution in the host country on the other. She states:

These attitudes and actions that are exhibited by South African citizens, in response to refugees and migrants, have forced black African foreign nationals to devise strategic ways in which they can ensure their own survival. (Sinazo)

Her essay went on to depict the refugee as a mentor: "they come together once a week. ... [T]hey share their experiences and they learn together, and they heal together." This realisation challenged the victimhood discourse that she once held. Here, the refugee's generosity had a ripple effect on others, and challenged the view that refugees are opportunistic. We note that Sinazo's process of becoming crystallised through concrete examples in the data about her research participant's resilience and his willingness to create a sense of community among refugees. This denotes a "relational dynamic" (Bayat and Mitchell 2020), where Sinazo's becoming is linked to her increased awareness of the being and becoming of her participant.

In Bronwyn's research essay, she classified herself as part of the "Afropolitan" group, which signalled a connection beyond the borders of South Africa. Her "Afropolitan" identity came about because of intra-action within the assemblage, bearing in mind that various assemblages (like the classroom space and the interview space) also intersect and relate to each other. Bronwyn has emerged here as someone who has "power to act and to be acted upon" (Massumi 2015 quoted in Bayat and Mitchell 2020, 62). Like Sinazo, she has opened herself to the consideration, interrogation and acceptance of new knowledge.

In a focus group interview at the end of the course, Sinazo reflected on her growth as a researcher, realising that knowledge production requires listening and giving voice to participants, which involves letting go of one's desire to control the narrative that is developing. She stated, "I thought that this would be a great chance for them to speak up for themselves and hear what they have to say."

She also reflected on how the course enabled her to articulate her voice as a researcher:

The most important thing the course does is to be inclusive. ... We see that in how it allows students to voice out the thoughts in the blogs. ... It's very easy for me to write down my thoughts. ... It creates a space for me to thrive. (Sinazo)

Here Sinazo touches on the evidence-based learning model of the course as that which foregrounded students' reflections and favoured "bounded independence" (Levy and Petrusis 2012, 97–98) to offer students more freedom within a partly structured process of enquiry. In this instance, EBL shows that the journey from enquiry to knowledge making is one of articulating voice through questioning and revisiting assumptions, and about internalising how the making of new knowledge inflects one's process of becoming and sense of authenticity.

Do Sinazo and Bronwyn see themselves as knowledge makers? While not explicitly stated, each sought their own answers instead of being a "receiver" of pre-given answers. Here, EBL not only flips the classroom to privilege learners' agency in the knowledge acquisition process, but also disturbs the set teacher-student hierarchies and the assumption that research is the prerogative of postgraduate students and academics.

Angel

Angel is a white international senior undergraduate female student. The choice of excerpts from Angel's writing stems from moments where fluidity between Angel's personal experiences and theoretical engagement can be inferred. These texts are approached with the concept of becoming in mind, a means of suturing diverse reflections spanning theory and practice. The analysis illustrates that students are in-motion, becoming-researchers/knowledge makers rather than limiting themselves to fixed roles for their future selves (Carlin and Wallin 2014).

The start of the course saw Angel's description of her opposition to the ways her identity was constructed officially through identity documents that mark her origins. She chose instead to embrace an identity of a world citizen. This choice is not without tension. In addition, her status as a global citizen is seen through a critical lens (perhaps an additional layer of tension) where subjects who "live in transition" are also acknowledged (Braidotti 1994, 33). She reflects:

I am a German citizen on my documents but through my interest in languages, cultures, and the people I engage with I cannot identify with this expression. I am more actively practising and holding contact with South African culture and people. I also have a huge community in Italy and speak, read, and practise the culture regularly, therefore I would rather adopt the term "world citizen" through the journey I went through rather than holding onto the past. Another thought on these documentations of identity are the politics that lies behind it ... where certain identities have more freedom to decide about their mobility than others. (Angel)

Angel's emerging sense of her multiple identities materialises through her literacy practices. Through reading, writing, and speaking, she inhabits a nomadic self (we can

observe here that even though her movement has a different privilege of choice, her status does signal potential overlaps with the experiences of a refugee). This is a subject who resists being too anchored to place, embracing a locale strategically but open to movement (Braidotti 1994). The nomad turns the brought-along ideas (e.g., about the meaning of “home”) into resources, catalysed by the learning encounter in the classroom and the research field. During the course, reflections became a means of sharing biography and capturing a moment in the processing of becoming. The way Angel embraced linguistic diversity signalled her status as a “nomadic polyglot” working with fluid linguistic and temporal boundaries (Braidotti 1994, 15). For Angel, writing was a means to construct a self at rest or in motion. The complexity of self came from her use of language as a resource, where she stretched the reach of the English language through metaphors to express novel ideas based on her experiences.

One assertion forwarded in the abstract of this article is the nurturing of a critical citizen—not explicitly stated in the course outline, but welcomed through its pedagogy. In Angel’s case, the self that is constructed in this form of engagement is not the individual who relates to context, but a construction underpinned by sociality or community. The social construction of identity also explains its fluidity, and the potential tensions it may trigger when one’s identity departs from a socially acceptable script. When Angel wrote about instances of xenophobia, she signalled that the “fixing of identity leads to violence and mis-categorisations and does not recognise the true character of identity which is ever-changing”. Rather than a distant knowledge maker, this perspective on xenophobia informed her reframing of a researcher identity characterised by facets of her personal identity. For Angel, research needed to be conducted ethically to legitimate the knowledge maker, and this allowed such considerations as “limiting harm” to form milestones in the journey of becoming. Resisting epistemic violence formed part of Angel’s present, and her feeling of being “split all over the globe” became a resource and a means of knowing and understanding in her writing on ethical considerations. She reframed her “outsider” status to create a relationship and to establish mutuality with participants, creating the potential for affective bonds (Massumi 2002). These bonds draw on emotion and other encounters that often escape recognition or are backgrounded in positivist approaches favouring ideas of rationality. She notes,

I think the fact that I am a foreigner in SA as well will build some communality between the participant and me, therefore we share an outsider position ... but my foreignness is perceived and experienced differently than the one of the refugee. (Angel)

Here Angel also displayed a degree of self-awareness that recognised her privileged access to resources and her divergent experiences. These tensions were important to work with the multiplicity and fragmented notion of identity Angel came to claim. The excerpt below signals a critical engagement with identity theory where she aligned herself with Woodward’s (2002) position on multiple identities. While the excerpt does not mention specific moments, it draws on ideas of sociality and relations through which

individuals negotiate their changing contexts. The self is made and remade in this dynamic relationship, thereby possessing the capacity to affect its environment. The relationship, as Angel explains, was not without discomfort and characterised her sense of becoming.

Identity is the way one sees oneself and how others see one. It results from reflection, positioning, and interaction. According to Woodward, identities are fluid, changeable and multiple. However, through the organisation of the social, identities become fixed and limited in their liberty and these contradictions create tension within the individual. (Angel)

Anthony

Anthony is a so-called coloured final year Drama student. He states in one of his first reflections upon joining the course: “I have yet to find myself outside of the university space, as I have immersed myself into UCT culture, for the last three years, and I do not know what I would be without UCT.” Anthony does not subscribe to gender binaries: “I have chosen to identify as a non-binary body, and a body who cross-dresses.” His sense of comfort and security is thus tied in with his UCT identity. The above statement about his UCT identity indicates that Anthony’s sense of who he is beyond UCT is an uncertainty, a constraint which places his *Dasein* in distress.

Later, Anthony’s reflections delve deeper into issues of descendancy and history in relation to his sense of being as someone classified as “coloured”, an imposed identity he struggled to define and internalise. He says:

When I think and read of the Bushmen, I think of the Khoisan people. Tracking the genealogy of the Khoisan ... a thought comes to mind that coloured bodies in particular face a challenge in determining what their coloured identity is, how inadequate many coloured people feel, and how they question whether they have a place in present-day SA.

There is a sense here that the security offered within UCT to a “coloured” queer body may not be extended to the outside world. Anthony’s insecurity about his sense of belonging outside of UCT was symptomatic of how he felt about his classification as “coloured” within a democratic South Africa. He has not yet come to terms with what it means to be and feel “coloured” in the new political dispensation. In the Heideggerian sense, Anthony’s “authentic self” is therefore limited to UCT at this stage.

Anthony grapples with the identity theory of the course to interrogate and locate a richer, deeper understanding of his sense of becoming beyond UCT. His ability to realise and enact an identity in the public space signalled a transition from a space of familiarity to a space that no longer holds a sense of foreboding and uncertainty, but which instead now represents potential and promise, since correct action, as Anthony discovered, leads to change. He states:

Upon starting this course, I found that there are actually theories that attempt to explain identity. Woodward's and Hall's views allowed me to fully understand my position within the confines of the university space, and to an extent, helped me to solidify my identity across the UCT border. (Anthony)

Anthony's sense of becoming is also intricately linked to a renewed understanding of migrants and refugees, and his written reflections reveal a critique of the stereotypical judgements and subsequent injustices levelled against these marginal groups, something he feels should be publicly challenged. This is in strong contrast to Anthony's earlier views on migrants:

I thought that protesting against something was wrong. I thought that the ... government had a grip on things like xenophobia. I also had an attitude of "it doesn't affect me, so I won't worry about it." (Anthony)

Here Anthony exhibits aspects of Heidegger's notion of inauthenticity: "the self lost to the 'they'" (Wheeler 2013). He goes through the motions of daily life in an uncritical fashion, oblivious to and insulated from the realities around him. His participation within the AXL flipped classroom assemblage grounded in an EBL pedagogy led Anthony to shift his stance on migrants. He states that as South Africans "we do not know their stories" and should be mindful of "how we engage with them". The origins of this growing awareness came about because of Anthony's group interview session with a refugee participant where "agential qualities" were unearthed through dialogue. The outcome was that Anthony developed an enriched understanding of what it feels like to be a refugee. This resonates with his own predicament of finding a broader sense of belonging as a coloured "non-binary body ... who cross-dresses". The realisation of a common sense of humanity that went beyond difference came to fruition in the dialogical encounter with the refugee, which allowed Anthony to *really see* who the refugee is. Anthony experienced drastic shifts in his attitude and in the way he viewed other people's locations in the world. He had developed an authentic sense of being, which he owned beyond the university space. He says, "We are global citizens, and we have no place to reject the identities that they [refugees/migrants] are trying to construct now that they are inside the South African border." Anthony internalised that, like him, people who are different seek acceptance wherever they find themselves. This fusion of horizons ushers in a more tolerable, more socially conscious, and a more equitable orientation towards how the world should operate. This knowledge-production process is informed by a critical and emotional orientation: it is a collaborative, personal and social dynamic framed by, within and between assemblages, while at the same time informing, the changing meanings and transformations that come to define those assemblages.

Conclusion

It is noteworthy that students' researcher identities were not separate from their ontological position and experiences in the nascent democracy, where refugees are

sometimes marginalised. There was an added layer of complexity that ensured the importance of “listening” as a core responsibility of the researcher so that participants’ voices were not silenced in the rendition of fieldnotes. This ethical sensibility marked a milestone in our student participants’ process of becoming knowledge producers and signalled an awareness of “becoming-with others ... through relations of tolerance”, which offered students “the potential capacity” to realise their researcher selves (Bayat and Mitchell 2020, 50; 60; 63).

In this instance, EBL pedagogy challenges the undergraduate-postgraduate divide in terms of knowledge production. Throughout the research process, the ownership of ideas shifts hands from the participant to the researcher to the community in the writers’ circles. The ownership of ideas was at times individual and at times communal, and the power flowing between participants dislodged the idea of a fixed or single knowledge producer.

The distinctive quality of the course, then, is that it validates interim moments of sense-making in the present continuous, allowing for a shuttling between being and becoming. The course can be roughly divided into four phases, namely the phase of anchoring, the phase of encountering the other, the phase of reconciling theory with data, and the phase of assessment, in this case with a focus on reflective essays. While we seek to conclude here, the article opens new questions for future inquiry. For us as lecturers undergoing our own process of becoming, these ideas have once again challenged us to consider important questions: How open are we to celebrating students’ sense of becoming? To what extent are we anchoring the learning experience to a particular rubric? What does having a fixed end point do to ideas of success, since success cannot be isolated from one’s performance during the semester? The traditional notion of success strictly in terms of academic prowess ought to be problematised to encompass a more enduring and ongoing process of becoming. While academic institutions foreground academic achievement, this article shows that the ability to cope socially and “feel at home” is as influential in promoting success in the wider sense of the term, and also foregrounds an appreciation of the precarious and liminal spaces students occupy in the knowledge-making project.

References

- Adichie, C. 2009. “The Danger of a Single Story”. Filmed July 2009 in Oxford. TED video, 18:05.
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript?language=en#t-4505.
- Ahmed, A. K. 2019. “The Rise of Fallism: #RhodesMustFall and the Movement to Decolonize the University”. PhD diss., Columbia University. Accessed December 4, 2020.
<https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/d8-n7n3-e372>.

- Allen, D. J. 2015. "Ontology in Heidegger and Deleuze: A Comparative Analysis". *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 23 (1): 141–46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09672559.2014.996991>.
- Arend, M., A. Hunma, C. Hutchings, and G. Nomdo. 2017. "The Messiness of Meaning Making: Examining the Affordances of the Digital Space as a Mentoring and Tutoring Space for the Acquisition of Academic Literacy". *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* 5 (2): 89–111. <https://doi.org/10.24085/jsaa.v5i2.2704>.
- Bayat, A., and V. Mitchell. 2020. "Affective Assemblages Matter in Socially Just Pedagogies". *CriSTaL: Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning* 8 (1): 57–80. <https://doi.org/10.14426/cristal.v8i1.219>.
- Boyer, E. L. 1990. *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Lawrenceville, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bozalek, V., and M. Zembylas. 2017. "Towards a Response-Able Pedagogy across Higher Education Institutions in Post-Apartheid South Africa: An Ethico-Political Analysis". *Education as Change* 21 (2): 62–85. <https://doi.org/10.17159/1947-9417/2017/2017>.
- Braidotti, R. 1994. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Carlin, M., and J. Wallin. 2014. *Deleuze and Guattari, Politics and Education: For a People Yet to Come*. London: Bloomsbury Press.
- Deleuze, G., and F. Guattari. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated with a Foreword by B. Massumi. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dyson, A. H., and C. Genishi. 2005. *On the Case: Approaches to Language and Literacy Research*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Fairclough, N. 1995. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman.
- Finkelde, D. 2013. "Post-Structuralism". In *New Catholic Encyclopedia: Supplement 2012–2013: Ethics and Philosophy*, edited by R. Fastiggi, J. Koterski and T. Lipscombe, 1245–248. Detroit, MI: Gale.
- Freire, P. 2000. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Translated by M. B. Ramos. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Gallagher, J. R. 2019. "A Framework for Internet Case Study Methodology in Writing Studies". *Computers and Composition* 54: 102509. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2019.102509>.

- Healey, M. 2005. "Linking Research and Teaching to Benefit Student Learning". *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 29 (2): 183–201. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03098260500130387>.
- Healey, M., and A. Jenkins. 2009. *Developing Undergraduate Research and Inquiry*. New York, NY: Higher Education Academy.
- Heidegger, M. (1927) 1962. *Being and Time*. Translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson. London: SCM Press.
- Hunma, A., M. Arend, G. Nomdo, C. Hutchings, and S. Samson. 2019. "Revisiting Writer Identities in Discomforting Spaces: The Envisioned Self in Writing". *Alternation* 26 (2): 89–116. <https://doi.org/10.29086/2519-5476/2019/v26n2a5>.
- Levy, P., and R. Petrus. 2012. "How Do First-Year University Students Experience Inquiry and Research, and What Are the Implications for the Practice of Inquiry-Based Learning?" *Studies in Higher Education* 37 (1): 85–101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2010.499166>.
- Lillis, T., and M. Scott. 2007. "Defining Academic Literacies Research: Issues of Epistemology, Ideology and Strategy". *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Professional Practice* 4 (1): 5–32. <https://doi.org/10.1558/japl.v4i1.5>.
- Lishivha, W. 2019. "The Fallist Movement and the Changes It Has Made". *Mail & Guardian*, May 3, 2019. Accessed July 2, 2021. <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-05-03-00-the-fallist-movement-and-the-changes-it-has-made/>.
- Massumi, B. 2002. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11smvr0>.
- Mkhize, N. 2015. "Tenacious Belief in the Ideal of the University". *Business Day*, May 5, 2015. Accessed June 21, 2018. <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/columnists/2015-05-05-tenacious-belief-in-the-ideal-of-the-university/>.
- Moletsane, R. 2015. "Whose Knowledge Is It? Towards Reordering Knowledge Production and Dissemination in the Global South". *Educational Research for Social Change (ERSC)* 4 (2): 35–47. Accessed December 12, 2019. http://ersc.nmmu.ac.za/articles/Vol_4_No_2_Moletsane_pp_35-48_October_2015.pdf.
- Natanasabapathy, P., and S. Maathuis-Smith. 2019. "Philosophy of Being and Becoming: A Transformative Learning Approach Using Threshold Concepts". *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 51 (4): 369–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2018.1464439>.
- Nomdo, G., and A. Hunma. 2017. *Writing Your World: Finding Yourself in the Academic Space*. Accessed July 10, 2021. <https://www.coursera.org/learn/writing-your-world>.

- Perkins, D. 2010. *Making Learning Whole: How Seven Principles of Teaching Can Transform Education*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley and Sons.
- Roy, D., E. Kustra, and P. Borin. 2003. "What Is Unique About Inquiry-Based Courses?" Centre for Leadership and Learning (CLL). Accessed November 11, 2020. http://cll.mcmaster.ca/resources/misc/whats_unique_about_inquiry.html.
- Samson, S., M. Arend, A. Hunma, C. Hutchings, and G. Nomdo. 2018. "Constructing the ECP Lecturer as Care Giver and Receiver of Care through an Analysis of Student's Reflective Essays". In *Teaching in Extended Programmes in South Africa: Classroom Contexts, Lecturer Identities and Teaching Practices*, edited by L. Coleman, 57–66. Cape Town: Cape Peninsula University of Technology.
- Wheeler, M. 2013. "Martin Heidegger". In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Spring ed., edited by E. Zalta. Accessed July 7, 2021. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/heidegger/>.
- Yin, R. K. 2009. "How To Do Better Case Studies". In *The Sage Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods*, edited by L. Bickman and D. J. Rog, 254–82. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. <https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781483348858.n8>.