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Returning to the Source: Reflexivity and Transformation in Understanding a Humanising Pedagogy

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Abstract

While a humanising pedagogy can be a mechanism to facilitate (re)humanisation in the South African education context, a diversity of perspectives related to the concept prevails. This is to be expected given the variety of lived experiences and histories in South Africa. This project attempted to develop and extend shared understandings of the concept of a humanising pedagogy through a process of enacted reflexivity and transformative learning. A participatory mode of inquiry using metaphor drawings was used as a means of deconstructing the complex phenomenon of a humanising pedagogy—this included self-study by four teacher educators (authors of this paper) to facilitate shared understandings of its praxis. Such processes have the potential to catalyse the kind of transformative learning that continues to inform praxis.

Keywords: humanising pedagogy, reflexivity, transformative learning, metaphor drawings

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Introduction

In 2010, the Faculty of Education at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) embarked on an 18-month-long re-visioning journey, which culminated in the faculty's new vision and mission. Through this process, it took the first steps towards mutual humanisation (see Freire, 2003) as part of addressing and working with a dehumanising legacy, and acknowledging its presence in education in South Africa today. Zinn and Rodgers (2012, p. 76) contended that "the legacy of dehumanisation has been absorbed, wittingly and unwittingly into relationships within educational arenas which mirror and depict hierarchies of power, cultures of compliance, fear, as well as suppression and loss of voice." The faculty's re-visioning journey was the foundation for a curriculum renewal process that now seeks to embody a humanising pedagogy as the key philosophical underpinning of its vision, mission, and renewed curriculum—aligned to the university's adoption of the same. The

Abakhwezeli[4] (isiXhosa word for fire stokers) team was set up as a group of 10 people who facilitate and lead programme teams as part of curriculum renewal in the NMMU Faculty of Education. The four authors[5] of this article are all part of the Abakhwezeli team.

In facilitating rehumanisation (see Freire, 2003, p. 68) in the South African context, a diversity of perspectives around the concept of a humanising pedagogy prevails, given the variety of lived experiences and histories. Hence, it is to be expected that the meaning, embodiment, praxis, and permeation of a humanising pedagogy into our living, learning, and teaching spaces be informed by different understandings. Therefore, as part of the curriculum renewal journey, the Abakhwezeli, together with their programme teams, explored their understandings of a humanising pedagogy in a spirit of "'mutual vulnerability' as a humanising pedagogical principle that is central to educational efforts aimed at reconciliation" (Keet, Zinn, & Porteus, 2009, p. 109). In our 2013 end of year review retreat, the Abakhwezeli undertook to explore collaboratively their developing perspectives on the concept within the mode of enacted reflexivity, which "addresses the social relation of knowledge rather than its epistemic relation" (Maton, 2000, cited by Maton, 2003, p. 55). In particular, the purpose of the exercise was to develop shared understandings of what a humanising pedagogy could mean for us as leaders, teachers, and learners ourselves. Maton (2003, p. 55) advanced the idea that enacted reflexivity as sociological reflexivity "addresses the social relation of knowledge rather than its epistemic relation (Maton, 2000), that is, the subject's relation to knowledge (who does the objectifying) rather than the object's relation to the knowledge (what is being objectified and how)."

For the authors of this article, each of us came to this work from different starting points. Denise Zinn had engaged in research and advocacy related to humanising pedagogies from a transformative perspective as part of her portfolio as Dean of the Faculty of Education at both the University of Fort Hare and NMMU. She has coauthored articles on the subject (Adam, Zinn, Kemp, & Pieterse, 2014; Keet et al., 2009; Zinn & Rodgers, 2012). Denise had been actively promoting the discourse in curriculum renewal frameworks as a leader of the NMMU's Institutional Research Theme on Humanising Pedagogies. Kathija Adam, as Director of the School for Continuing Professional Development and as an academic who is passionate about creative and innovative teaching and learning, adopts a Freirean perspective and subscribes to a humanising pedagogy: "A humanizing education is the path through which men and women can become conscious about their presence in the world. The way they act and think when they develop all of their capacities, taking into consideration their needs, but also the needs and aspirations of others" (Darder, 2003, p. 498 citing Freire and Frei Betto, 1985, pp. 14–15). For Raj Kurup and André du Plessis as Head of Programme for the honours and postgraduate certificates in education (PGCE) respectively, their engagement with the notion of a humanising pedagogy has been with the co-constructed faculty curriculum framework. The framework has a humanising (Freire, 2003) pedagogy as its underpinning philosophy and has therefore been discussed by the teams working on the faculty's new curricula.

Hence, the main question guiding this study can be conceptualised as follows:

- How can a group of teacher educators explore collaboratively and extend shared understandings of the praxis of a humanising pedagogy?

[4] This concept was borrowed from the University of Fort Hare's Distance Education Programme, which adopted it as an apt way to depict the role of tutors working with students in their in-service distance teacher education programmes. At NMMU, the Abakwhezeli team is made up of heads of programmes involved in curriculum renewal, directors of the two schools in which these programmes are located, the dean, and a senior administrative assistant.

[5] The four authors are also all teacher educators and include the dean of the faculty, one director of school, and two heads of programme.

Our understanding of the term *praxis* follows Habermas's (1974) formulation as the dialectic between theory and practice. Kemmis (2010, p. 17) further explained that:

> *Praxis-related research aims to change things in praxis: developing an inquiry culture in a field setting, developing a critical approach amongst participants, empowering participants to take action, building their sense of solidarity, drawing on and developing their life experiences, opening communicative space between them . . . all of which can contribute to changes in currently established modes of praxis.*

We agree with Kemmis (2010, p. 9), in a similar vein to Zuber-Skerritt (2011, p. 62), that practice is researchable from the "inside out." Zuber-Skerritt (2011, p. 62, with reference to Kemmis, 2010) eloquently stated that, "research for praxis is only useful if it is conducted not by external specialists researchers 'on the sidelines' but by those whose individual and collective praxis is both their proper work and the focus of their critical investigation." In order to work towards praxis-related research with a view to establish and extend shared understandings of a humanising pedagogy, the conceptual framework upon which this study is based relates to reflexivity—reflexivity that embraces introspection, intersubjective reflection, mutual collaboration, social critique of our context (Finlay, 2002), and transformative learning (Mezirow, 1997). These concepts, and how they are interlinked, are explained in detail in the conceptual framework section that follows.

Conceptual Framework

In this article, we utilise the following concepts to frame our inquiry: humanising pedagogy, reflexivity, and transformative learning. While each of these concepts can be traced to particular bodies of work and literature, they become interwoven in our engagement during this study. Humanising pedagogy, which was the initial focus of the study, requires as part of its praxis a reflective and reflexive stance. It is linked to constantly "being fully present" (Rodgers, 2002 p. 858), and critically conscious of the context in which one works and how one interacts with others, of the nature of one's relationships, and the impact of one's actions on others and the environment in which learning takes place. In order to achieve this state of awareness, it is necessary to reflect on what is happening in one's interactions because the impact of reflection has implications for how we as individuals act in our future engagements or interactions. Hence, the reflexive part influences our thinking and our actions and the potential for transformative learning. What follows, is a brief explication of these concepts, that is, humanising pedagogy, reflexivity, and transformative learning as they contributed to our engagement in this project.

Humanising Pedagogy

The notion of a humanising pedagogy is a key underpinning philosophy in NMMU's Vision 2020, where it states:

> *NMMU adopts an integrative approach to teaching and learning [through] a humanising pedagogy that is based on a relationship of trust, caring and respect between staff and students, values the student as a whole person by taking into account the diverse cultural, socio-political, spiritual and linguistic realities that shape their self-understanding, and promotes active (deep) learning amongst a student body with diverse educational backgrounds and learning styles (NMMU, 2010, p. 10).*

It also forms an integral part of the faculty's vision and mission, where it is one of the principle ways in which we see our mission enabled and embodied through praxis. However, it is still unclear to

many what exactly this praxis entails, how one would recognise that it is being practised, and how it could be taught to future teachers. Hence, an ongoing exploration of this concept is expected. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2003, pp. 68–69), Freire stated that "in a humanising pedagogy the method ceases to be an instrument by which teachers . . . can manipulate students, but rather expresses the consciousness of the students . . . themselves." The use of the phrase, a teaching method, has given rise to the expectation that there may be some magical method[6] that requires definition, and could thus be taught or described in some way. Freire (2003) eloquently stated that to promote humanisation, a humanising pedagogy is critical in order to promote (re)humanisation. According to Messekher, Reilly, and Harrison (2010, with reference to Freire, 2003, p. 75) Freire stated that it appears that "mutual humanization" is possible when teachers promote and embrace a humanising pedagogy. They argue that that this does not only require a dialogical approach, but a dialogical approach that assists in the development of critical consciousness (Messekher, Reilly, & Harrison, 2010). Again, while these ideas are attractive theoretically, they required exploration and exemplification to give them substance and make them living examples in everyday practice.

The deliberate inclusion of a humanising pedagogy at NMMU and in the Faculty of Education, required an acknowledgement that our "normative meaning-making frames needed to be disrupted" (Keet et al., 2009, p. 110). By this, we understood that our traditional and accepted ways of thinking and doing required critical scrutiny, and recognition that these may be both limited and also limiting in our teaching and learning engagements if we are to reach the full range of diversities present in our classrooms. As Bartolomé (1994, p. 174) argued, teachers need to "interrogate, and change their biased beliefs and fragmented views." Much of the re-visioning journey in the faculty brought into focus the need for a humanising pedagogy that responds to "the consequences of conflict and the factors that gave rise to the conflict in the first instance" (Keet et al., 2009, p. 109). The existing daily reality of conflicting views and perspectives, informed by diverse histories and lived experiences, needed to be acknowledged before we could endeavour to work towards the critical consciousness required for humanising pedagogical praxis.

While it has been relatively easy for colleagues and students to embrace the general notion of a humanising pedagogy, what the concept means in practice has been the subject of much debate, contestation, and experimentation. In 2011, a visiting Fulbright Scholar in the faculty, Carol Rodgers, linked the concept to Hawkins' (1967), I–Thou–It model, which consolidated the idea that a humanising pedagogy was not only about relationships between the "I" (the teacher) and the "Thou" (learner), but had to also include the "It" (the content/knowledge/subject matter) that needed to be learned. A humanising pedagogy, therefore, had to develop a kind of pedagogical agency, enabling learning to occur, for the knowledge to be fully owned by, and thus empowering, the learner. It needed to take into account who the learner was, and where she or he was coming from in terms of their prior knowledge and assets—for example, background, languages, contextual, and experiential knowledges—as key aspects of practicing a humanising pedagogy.

Key writings and readings also helped identify basic tenets such as critical consciousness (Bartolomé, 1994; Freire, 2003; Giroux, 2010; Salazar, 2013), the importance of emotions, care, and compassion (Noddings, 2005; Nussbaum, 2010), issues of mutual vulnerability and social justice (Keet et al., 2009), as well as issues of voice (Adam et al., 2014; Zinn & Rodgers, 2012) as important components of a humanising pedagogy. As part of our curriculum renewal journey, faculty members were exposed to these ideas during various engagements (workshops, seminars, meeting discussions, etc.), and invited to debate issues based on these readings. How these understandings would be translated into our curricula and practice is the subject of ongoing exploration. In order to develop

6 Bartolomé's (1994) article, "Beyond the methods fetish: Toward a humanizing pedagogy," also argued against this expectation.

these understandings, reflexive practice has emerged as an important tool for this kind of exploration.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity can be defined as a process in which "researchers engage in explicit self-aware meta-analysis" (Finlay, 2002, p. 209). Sandelowski and Barroso (2002, p. 222, as cited by Ryan, 2005, p. 5) further explained that "reflexivity implies the ability to reflect inward toward oneself as the inquirer; outward to the cultural, historical, linguistic, political, and other forces that shape everything about inquiry; and, in between researcher and participant to the social interaction they share." It is the inclusion of, and impact on, the self that is particularly pertinent to this project of a humanising pedagogy, as we recognised in our re-visioning journey engagements, which started in the faculty in 2009/10—"it all starts with us" (Faculty of Education Newsletter, 2011, p. 1). This connection between the self, a humanising pedagogy, and the necessary component of critical consciousness is enabled by reflexivity.

Finlay (2002, p. 212) offered a typology of five variants of reflexivity, namely, "introspection, inter-subjective reflection, mutual collaboration, social critique and discursive deconstruction." Reflexivity as introspection is not easy because it require of individuals to "embrace their own humanness as the basis for psychological understanding" (Finlay, 2002, p. 213 with reference to Walsh, 1995, p. 335). The primary evidence when embarking on introspection is one's "own reflecting, intuiting and thinking" (Finlay, 2002, p. 213 with reference to Moustakas, 1994).

While Finlay (2002, p. 215) supported this notion of introspection, she maintained that:

> *The challenge for researchers using introspection is to use personal revelation not as an end in itself but as a springboard for interpretations and more general insight. In this sense, the researcher moves beyond 'benign introspection' (Woolgar, 1988, p. 22) to become more explicit about the link between knowledge claims, personal experiences of both participant and researcher and the social context.*

Finlay (2002, p. 215) thus posited that introspection assists within the intersubjective reflection dimension where research participants "explore the mutual meanings emerging within the research relationship." They "focus on the situated and negotiated nature of the research encounter" (Finlay, 2002, p. 215) and hence, it addresses radical self-reflective consciousness, "where the self-in-relation-to-others becomes both the aim and the object of focus" (Finlay, 2002, p. 216). Through mutual collaboration "researchers simultaneously participants in their own research, engage in cycles of mutual reflection and experience" (Finlay, 2002, p. 218). She continued: "Collaborative researchers argue that dialogue within a group allows members to move beyond their preconceived theories and subjective biases towards representing multiple voices" (2002, p. 219). Because the aim of this study is to explore shared understandings of a humanising pedagogy, the collaborative research approach enabling these multiple dimensions of reflexivity adopted by the Abakhwezeli and the authors not only enriched and deepened both individual and collective understandings of the concept of a humanising pedagogy, but also resulted in transformative learning for all.

Transformative Learning

Transformative learning is constructivist in nature and associated with rational and cognitive processes (Papastamatis & Panitsides, 2014) because the constructivist dimension implies that we make meaning by means of social interaction to make sense of reality. As such, the constructivist

transformational process requires that a person or group finds a course of action to resolve contradictions by means of discourse (Papastamatis & Panitsides, 2014). Contradictions imply disagreement, conflict, or differences, hence, in order to resolve these, change is implied which, again refers to being different than before—transformed. As adults, we hold a vast array of experiences that we are unaware of or, as Mezirow (1997, p. 5) stated, we as adults have a "coherent body of experience" inside of us, experiences that include or refer to "associations, concepts, values, feelings, conditioned responses." We utilise these experiences as lenses or interpretation tools through which we interpret our reality (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5). These lenses act as a reference structure that assists us to make sense of our personal experiences (Mezirow, 1997), reference structures that refer to "habits of mind" and "point of view" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5). As such, these lenses "shape and delimit expectations, perceptions, cognition, and feelings" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5), and the shaping influences our actions. At this point, we want to add that we are of the opinion that these lenses also shape our beliefs, similar to what Fives and Buehl (2012) proposed. These authors argued that from a teacher belief position, "beliefs act as filters, frames, or guides" and "beliefs filter information and experience" (Fives & Buehl, 2012, p. 478). Because teachers are adults, Fives and Buehl's (2012) position could be transferable to all adults and appears to be aligned with Mezirow's (1997) perspective as well as with Bourdieu's (1977, 1991) notion of habitus—dispositions that inform action. Mezirow (1997) further posited that human beings are likely to discard preconceptions—and we would include beliefs, perceptions, and perspectives here—that do not align with our own (Mezirow, 1997).

The above suggests that change within human beings is not easy, however, it is not impossible. Dirkx (1998, pp. 3–8) stated that transformation could be achieved by means of consciousness raising, critical reflection, transformation as development, and transformation as individuation. For Mezirow (1997), critical reflection on assumptions (and we would add perceptions, beliefs, thinking, and feelings) is key to assisting with the personal transformation process. In order to promote transformation, Mezirow (2000, p. 22, cited by Papastamatis & Panitsides, 2014, p. 76) has provided a 10-stage plan that can be followed to assist with the transformation process. The proposed process (to be elaborated upon in the next section) requires the following steps:

- [identifying] a disorienting dilemma
- self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame
- a critical evaluation of assumptions
- recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared
- exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions
- formulating a course of action
- acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
- provisional trying of new roles
- building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
- reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective.

(Mezirow, 2000, p. 22, cited by Papastamatis & Panitsides, 2014, p. 76)

Although the main aim of the process is transformation, it is important to take cognisance of the fact that critical reflection (and following the above-stated steps) does not imply that positive transformation will be achieved, because Mezirow (1997) argued that there are several possible outcomes. He stated that an individual could "elaborate an existing point of view," "establish new points of view," "transform our point of view," or "transform our ethnocentric habit of mind" (1997, p. 7). The implication is thus, that a person could become more tolerant or even less tolerant

towards an individual or group, look with different eyes at another person or group, or alternatively become more biased or prejudiced towards an individual or group (Mezirow, 1997). However, it is important to note that in order for transformative learning to have a positive outcome, it is important that the individual and others can recognise this change, that is, the change must be visible in our actions (Papastamatis & Panitsides, 2014).

In this study, reflexivity initiated through the use of metaphor drawings provided a mechanism for transformative learning in relation to understandings of a humanising pedagogy. In the next section, the methodology is explained to show how the conceptual framework became the platform for interrogating and extending the knowledge and theory about praxis.

Methodology

Bergold and Thomas (2012, para. 1) stated that "participatory research methods are geared towards planning and conducting the research process *with* those people whose life-world and meaningful actions are under study." Based on the above, the aim of the inquiry of this paper is twofold: real life context and our actions in practice to which Bergold and Thomas (2012) referred. As such, the design of this study utilised a two-phase process within which a participatory mode of inquiry was followed by a self-study component. The phases were sequential, the first providing the initial set of data and the second, an interrogation of the first data set using reflexive dialogue (Pithouse-Morgan & van Laren, 2012) to construct deep sense making.

Phase 1

In Phase 1, metaphor drawings were used because it appeared that the potential of metaphors is that they "draw attention to implicit aspects and may function as powerful starting points for new ways of seeing" (Alvesson, 2003, p. 18)—in this instance, a humanising pedagogy—by the full Abakhwezeli team. Metaphor drawings have been used as a tool to promote professional learning in various studies (see Mitchell, 2008; van Laren, 2007, 2014; van Laren, et al., 2014).

As part of a reflection and planning retreat, the Abakhwezeli team invited a facilitator well known for her expertise in reflective arts-based methodologies to lead a process in which they could come to deeper understandings of what a humanising pedagogy could mean in practice. As an initial exercise to introduce the team to the use of metaphors as stimulus for discussion, the Abakhwezeli group deliberated together over a metaphor drawing that the invited facilitator selected. The value of metaphor lies in what it offers because it can "draw attention to implicit aspects of a phenomenon and may function as powerful starting points for new ways of seeing" what has been taken for granted (Alvesson, 2003, p. 18 and Alvesson, 2003 with reference to Morgan, 1980, 1986). The use of drawings as metaphors was highlighted by Pithouse (2011, p. 40) when she stated that "metaphor drawings do not depict an event or experience factually or realistically. Instead, they [drawings] use metaphors or symbols to show something important or meaningful about the event or experience." Metaphors are also used "to provide overviews of intellectual fields and to indicate what is illuminated and what is hidden in different perspectives" (Alvesson, 2003, p. 18 with reference to Morgan 1980, 1986).

After our initial exposure and engagement with metaphor drawings as facilitated by the outside facilitator, we started to draw and engage with our own metaphor drawings in response to the following prompt:

- Draw your own metaphor to illustrate how you think teaching and learning takes place when a humanising pedagogy is practised.

The 10 drawings produced by the members of Abakhwezeli were then categorised into three sets by the facilitator. Arbitrarily assigned groups of three or four members were asked to, within a 15-minute time frame, curate the set of drawings as though they were being prepared for an exhibition. Each group was asked to give their exhibition a title. Construction of this exhibition led to further discussions within each group. This enabled an opportunity to review and dialogue understandings of what individuals thought a humanising pedagogy looked like in practice. Drawings were arranged by the groups in ways that best depicted the chosen theme or title, and each curated set was displayed on a large flipchart. The groups then presented their interpretations of the pictures, followed by a discussion with the larger group. Finally, a culminating discussion about the overall exhibition ensued. The drawings and reflexive dialogues (Pithouse-Morgan & Van Laren, 2012) about the drawings attempted to bring participants closer to a richer and shared set of understandings of the phenomenon of a humanising pedagogy. All small and big group discussions described above were recorded and subsequently transcribed. Data generated in this phase thus included the initial group discussion of the construction site metaphor for teaching and learning, the drawings as exhibits, as well as the small and larger group discussions. All of these contribute to collective and shared understandings of a humanising pedagogy. A few months later, the authors, with permission from the rest of the group[7], embarked on Phase 2 of the research process.

With reference to Mezirow's (2000, p. 22, cited by Papastamatis & Panitsides, 2014, p. 76) 10 steps referred to previously, it appears that in Phase 1 the first five steps were apparent as follows: The disorientating dilemma was humanising pedagogy and its praxis, which led to self-examination by means of drawings. The drawing process included that the participants thought critically about their assumptions pertaining to humanising pedagogy and shared their perspectives, including how they perceived their role, relations, and a possible plan of action. Steps 6 to 10 emanated from Phase 2.

Phase 2

In Phase 2, a self-study approach was employed when the four authors of this research piece revisited their individual drawings and the curated collection in which their drawings featured. Written responses to common prompts were followed by mutual discussion and dialogue. This provided a platform for "building a learning community of engaged scholarship" (Pithouse, Mitchell, & Weber, 2009, p. 45). LaBoskey (2004, cited by Pithouse et al., 2009, p. 45) described four integral aspects with reference to self-study:

- Self-study is improvement-aimed and it looks for, and requires evidence of, reframed thinking and transformed practice of the researcher;
- Self-study involves 'interactions with our colleagues near and far, with our students, with the educational literature, and with our own previous work . . . to confirm or challenge our developing understandings' (2004, p. 259);
- Self-study employs multiple, primarily qualitative methods, some that are commonly used in general educational research, and some that are innovative. . . . These methods provide us with opportunities to gain different, and thus more comprehensive, perspectives on the educational processes under investigation' (2004, pp. 859–860); and
- Self-study is undertaken with an intention to go public, to 'formalize our work and make it available to our professional community for deliberation, further testing, and judgment.' (2004, p. 860)

[7] All of the members of the Abakhwezeli group were invited to be part of the reflection and writing of this piece, but only those listed were able to dedicate time to it at that stage. Those not able to do so were asked for permission to use the data from Phase 1, as described in this article; this permission was freely given.

Hence, learning from self-study is not only a meaningful pursuit for the individuals engaging in research of this nature, but it is also "meaningful, useful and trustworthy for those drawing on such findings for their own practice" (Pithouse et al., 2009, p. 45 with reference to Loughran, 2005). In this phase, the authors interrogated the concept of reflexivity prior to embarking on the reflexive process. After reviewing a number of different articles that attempt to provide clarity on the process of reflexivity, the typology provided by Finlay (2002, p. 211) was adopted by the group as a frame of reference for the reflexive process, in relation to their individual drawings and the themed group drawings in which their drawings featured. A number of prompts were used to stimulate introspection and interpersonal reflection amongst the authors as they revisited their drawings and the conversations in Phase 1. These included using Finlay's (2002) typology as a framework. The prompts used for the introspection phase were as follows:

- When doing the metaphor drawing I was, thinking of/about/that/of representing ... .
- When doing the metaphor drawing, I was feeling …
- When doing the metaphor drawing, I was conscious of …

With these prompts, the focus was on insights that emerged from introspection (thinking back to the event); however, this was not an end in itself but was used as a "springboard for interpretation and more general insights" (Finlay, 2002, p. 213). In this phase, Finlay (2002) claimed that "the researcher moves beyond 'benign introspection' to become more explicit about the line between knowledge claims, personal experiences, and social contexts" (citing Woolgar, 1988, p. 22). Mutual meanings then began to emerge as the authors revisited the themed drawings and the Abakhwezeli small and large group discussions that had been transcribed. Introspection provided a vehicle for "inward meaning" while interpersonal reflection provided an "outward [view] within the realm of shared meaning" (Finlay, 2002, p. 218).

The prompts used for the interpersonal reflection phase were:

- On revisiting/relooking at my drawing I notice …
- Seeing my drawing in the collective theme I …

Once individual authors had completed their responses to the prompts as part of introspection and interpersonal reflection processes, the group shared their responses with each other as part of what Finlay (2002, p. 218) termed, mutual collaboration. The authors used this co-constituted mutual collaborative space to promote reflexive dialogue (Pithouse-Morgan & van Laren, 2012) about the data. While common themes became evident, it was also a space within which the reflexive dialogue and interactions resulted in "confronting, modifying and honing in" (Finlay, 2002, p. 218) on individual interpretations. This is where the authors were moved beyond their own preconceived ideas towards representing multiple voices and addressing any conflicting positions.

Hence, the data presented in this paper first considers individual interpretations (from Phase 1), using introspection and interpersonal reflections where each of the authors presents his or her collation of learning from the various prompts. Thereafter, further reflexive dialogue through mutual collaboration about individual collations of learning is discussed as further learning before conclusions are drawn. These aspects referred to above resonate with the first five steps of Mezirow's 10-stage model (2000, p. 22, cited by Papastamatis & Panitsides, 2014, p. 76). Steps 6 to 10 were not completely implemented because Steps 7 to 10 require that one engage in practice with what has been learned. The authors were not in a position at that point in time to practically implement their learning in the classroom context due to our engagement with the research process. We, therefore, theorised how a plan of action (Step 6) could become evident in our context and what the implications of the new roles could be (Step 8) when it is integrated as new perspective in reality

(Step 10). Hence, it involved rethinking existing roles and actions in order to move towards change in existing thinking and relationships with our students (Papastamatis & Panitsides, 2014, p. 76 with reference to Mezirow, 2000).

In order to present the key aspects as indicated by each of the four authors (indicated below as Kathija, André, Raj, and Denise), these main ideas are designated by bullet points in the findings section based on the suggestions of Creswell (2009, pp. 185–190). This entailed that the main ideas, that we as the four participating authors indicated, were presented by means of a phrase that illuminated aspects related to our understandings of humanising pedagogy and what its praxis entails.

Findings: Individual Collation of Learning about a Humanising Pedagogy

In the next subsections the authors present a collation of their own introspective and interpersonal reflective writing, depicting personal learning in relation to their views of what they initially perceived a humanising pedagogy to be and how, on revisiting their drawings as well as considering the group discussions in phase one of this study, they "confronted, modified and honed in" (Finlay, 2002, p. 218) on their individual interpretations.

Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Reflections

The reflections of the four participating authors are presented below. The first person is used in order to indicate how each individual has reflected his or her thinking.

Kathija: Rhythmic Entropy

When I was asked to draw a metaphor of a humanising pedagogy, I was immediately drawn to a visual image of a rhythm of movement—a vision of perfect alignment derived from deep physical connection when a group of people row together (see Fig 1.1).

Connection among human beings via collaboration and sharing

What I imagined at the time is beautifully described by Lin (2011, p. 126) in relation to the art of rowing:

> *Rowing in the west is like dragon boat racing in the east. When a crew is aligned and all oars row as one, the boat becomes an unstoppable force. It glides effortlessly, almost flying over the water as it pulls ahead with the greatest ease. Despite the physical exertion and constant motion, everyone in the crew feels a certain peace and serenity. Connected to one another in a way beyond the physical crew members can feel an energy coursing through them, binding them together moving in perfect synchronisation.*

In choosing to draw a group of people rowing, I wanted to depict a motion that shows the connection, which at the most subliminal level reflects what it means to be human. Hence, the human being is not an object, but a living, breathing soul, worthy of attention. Therefore, in any humanising teaching and learning encounter, I believe that a connection develops between teacher and student and between students and their peers. It is this connection between people that builds community and positions the responsibility for teaching and learning as a shared enterprise. The combined ownership of the process unifies the group in ways that engender togetherness and trust. Thus, no matter what the external environment is like, there is trust that the group will achieve its goal through combined effort and hard work. I entitled my drawing "Rhythmic Entropy" because the rhythm draws on the synergy and deliberate motion that requires the participation and collaboration

of all. However, the precision of the rhythm is dependent on an equilibrium that relates to the expiration of energy in a physical act, hence the term, *entropy*[8]. Thus my initial understandings of what a humanising pedagogy could be, are described as: "A human connection, which develops classroom community where togetherness, trust, equality, collaboration, and sharing contribute towards a common co-constructed goal related to learning."

Fig 1.1: "Rhythmic Entropy"

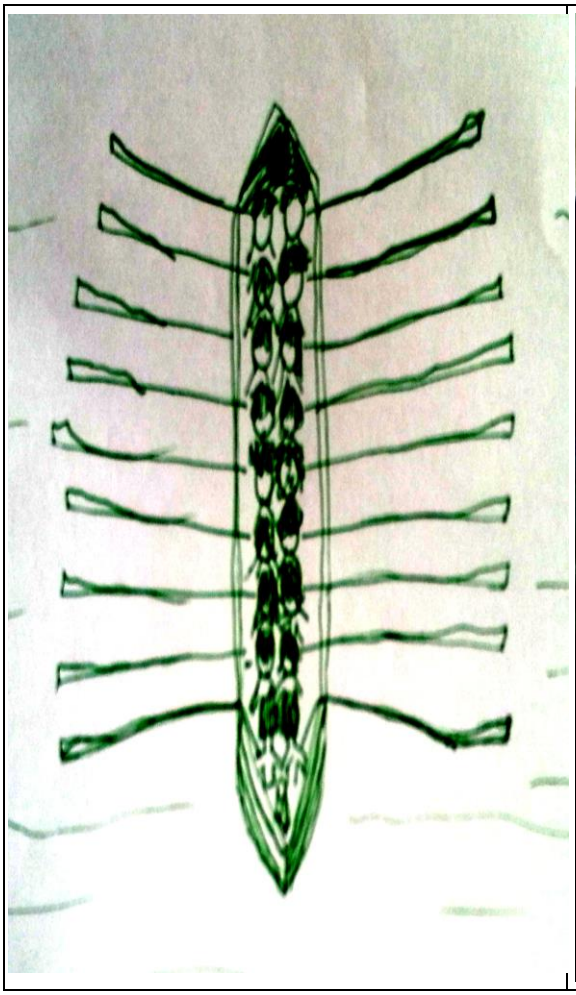
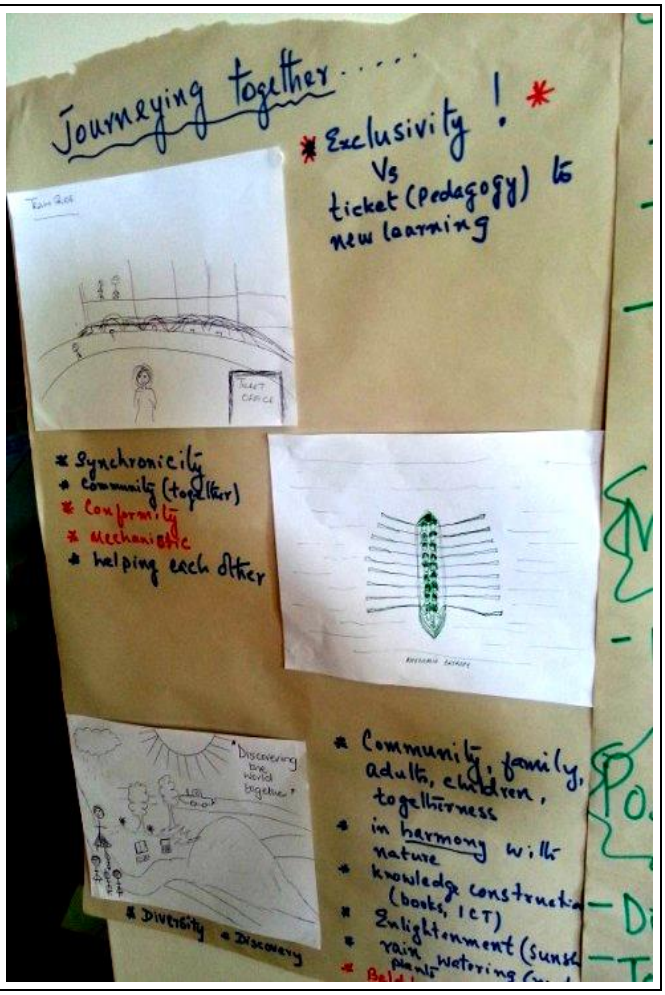


Fig 1.2: "Journeying Together …"



Authenticity, openness, unique potential and mutual vulnerability.

While these were my initial thoughts, a review and introspection of the drawing a few months later brought to my consciousness that rhythmic entropy actually describes, for me, the kind of energy a humanising space expends and emits. In each encounter, there is authenticity and openness to vulnerability as the individual contributes, but also trusts others in the collective process. There is a firm belief in the true potential of each individual who, in working together, will get the team there. Through practice and through working with individual strengths, a moment arrives in the teaching encounter when all of the learning comes together—creating the unison that makes the "boat an unstoppable force" (as described by Lin, 2011, p. 216).

[8] Scientific definitions and connotations of the word *entropy* are not deliberated on here. It is described in how I thought about the concept at the time.

During Phase 1, my drawing was curated under the theme "Journeying Together . . ." with two other pictures, one depicting a train ride and the other a road trip through the countryside (see Figure 1.2). Seeing my drawing themed and discussed by colleagues opened up another dimension to my thinking. The focus of the discussions in Phase 1 centred on the act of teaching and learning being, metaphorically, a trip or journey. This echoed my own ideas of the concept. However, an observation from a colleague during the small group discussion concerning mechanistic conformity provided a springboard for my own questioning because I had never before focused on similarity in the task of rowing. I wondered if this could point to an unconscious neglect of diversity and differentiation in my own classroom. I wanted to delve more into this because it is not uncommon to design learning that requires learners to confirm that outcomes have been met in very similar ways. I found myself asking some tough questions as I attempted to think about how I might be subscribing to a humanising pedagogy philosophically, but perhaps not embracing it enough in practice.

Opening and exploring choices instead of being in control

In reviewing my drawing in relation to the other two drawings in the collective as well as the group conversation, I was immediately struck by other elements that I had not considered in my own drawings. The train ride drawing, for example, brought with it the notion of access control so, in terms of my canoe, who was allowed in and who was not? I learned from the discussion that access control is not necessarily a negative thing—it does limit, but perhaps for good reason. I found this to be quite useful because it deepened how I saw the learners in my classroom. I wondered about how do we as educators provide alternative pathways to build support if required, as well as a number of mechanisms to enable access. In the road trip picture, the presence of a diversified human landscape confirmed the contribution of all. The title of this picture, "Discovering the World Together," reminded me of the senses of curiosity, awe, and wonderment that so often get excluded from classrooms because there is a rush to cover content. This picture also showed natural with synthetic, and modernity and technology. A humanising pedagogy would embrace all forms of learning and representations of learning, and there should be a wide selection of choices. It also spoke to me about alternative learning spaces beyond a formal classroom. This reminded me of a part of the NMMU Faculty of Education's Mission that advocates, "Bringing the classroom into the world and the world into the classroom" (NMMU, 2016, p. 1).

André: Hands of Equity and Sincereness

My engagement with the notion of a humanising pedagogy was initiated with the co-constructed faculty curriculum framework, and while working with the PGCE team on the curriculum renewal process.

Embracing different cultural perspectives

When I was asked to depict a humanising pedagogy as a metaphor, I immediately contemplated that when we talk, discuss, read, and listen to someone else's opinions, perceptions, and understanding of a concept or observation, we tend to think that our thinking and understanding is similar, even after we have articulated our understandings. This seems to be the ideal, but our background and cultural tools are different. We cannot claim to be part of one objective reality; rather, we are part of our own subjective reality that suggests that there are multiple realities.

Co-learning through input from all and, disagreements are part of life

On revisiting my picture (Fig 2.1), I became aware that I am also a learner during my interactions. I am in a learner's position most of the time, as others lend a hand to my thinking and growing. We all learn from one another. In fact, learning happens when the mind is stretched and when we are challenged, when our thinking about something is disrupted, turned into disequilibrium. I have

realised that we have to disagree in many instances. These disagreements are valuable to take us forward, to rethink our own thinking and own positions. We need the hands, feet, and input of others too.

Fig 2.1: "Hands of Equity and Sincereness"

Fig 2.2 "Humanising is 'Becoming'"

A humanising pedagogy is a collective activity that is ongoing and does not have an end. The spiral in the hands drawing represented this to me. One goes through spiralling phases in different ways, with no end in sight. A humanising pedagogy does not imply one-way action, that is, one person giving and the other merely receiving. It is about giving and sharing from both parties, as depicted by the Batho Pele drawing (Fig 2.2, lower right)—see Endnote 6. We share, but at the same time, the receiver should come to the realisation that sharing does not just mean receiving all the time but also giving, in other ways, of what one possesses; the receiver can also share. The curated drawings (Fig 2.2) made me realise that we learn from one another all the time. Learning from one another is vital. Everyone has something to contribute in his or her way. It entails moving into and out of the centre and standing on the periphery at some times—probably most of the time.

Being conscious of the other and ourselves as not being the sole knower

I realised that when I look at my understanding of a humanising pedagogy by comparing it to the grouped drawings (Fig 2.2), how I (or someone else) will perceive, experience, understand, or interpret a concept is not always the same; in fact, in most cases it will be different because we all have our own personal positions. The drawing implies that one has to be conscious of where the other person positions himself or herself. Academics seem to see themselves on another level when they compare themselves to their students. We seem to think that we are more knowledgeable and skillfull. The system perpetuates the view of the lecturer or teacher as the knower and the student or learner as the inexperienced "empty vessel." This is exactly what a humanising pedagogy tries to change, as it aims to promote co-learning and rethinking of our current power relationships. As lecturers, we see ourselves as "bigger" than our students, being more knowledgeable of our subject as well as in terms of our experiences. But my drawing does not show the "pouring of knowledge," it

is "walking with" on the path by lending a hand(s), not just giving a hand. It is scaffolding learners or students, that is, taking them from where they are to where they could be: potential.

Leaders are fallible and require hand-holding

Leaders are fallible: lecturers and leaders also need hand-holding. It is sometimes about letting go. It is also about transforming yourself, that is, your thinking, doing, and perceptions as leader, of what is "right," and what is the way forward.

Raj: Food Garden in a School

My personal view of a humanistic approach to education was largely influenced by my past experience of working with teachers and learners to improve the quality of mathematics teaching and learning in a cluster of high schools in a rural region in the Eastern Cape. A deeper understanding of the context of the school environment was essential for me to attempt any improvement in the quality of teaching and learning taking place at the schools. My observation of the school environment and the kind of teaching and learning happening in the classroom indicated to me that I should first find ways and means of bringing the fractured communities of teachers, learners, and parents to work together towards a shared goal before any improvement in the teaching and learning of mathematics can be attempted. As a strategy to bring the disparate communities together, I started a project of developing a food garden in each of the schools.

Preparation of the context for everyone's needs is important

When prompted to draw a metaphor to express my vision of a humanising pedagogy in education, I was instantly reminded of my experience of facilitating the development of food gardens in schools (Fig 3.1).

Fig 3.1: "Food Garden in a School"

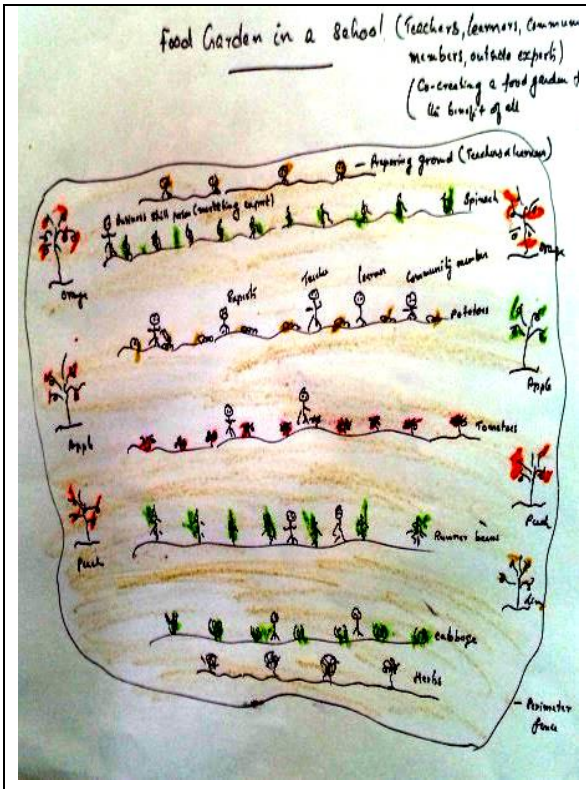


Fig 3.2: "Rhythms of Humanity"

Various aspects of what I envisage as a humanising pedagogy were manifest in the process of developing a food garden. For example, considerable time was spent by the teachers, learners, and parents in detailed planning of the garden. The preparation of the ground, the type of vegetables, herbs, and fruit trees to be planted, when to do the planting, how to market the produce, who would benefit from the produce, and so forth, were some of the important considerations during the planning meeting. It was interesting to notice that when some learners suggested planting exotic fruit trees and vegetables that are not usually consumed by the community, one of the adults in the group explained that the purpose of the food garden was to cater to the needs of the community at large.

Safe space for discussions—mutual respect for divergent viewpoints

My observation of the meticulous planning of the food garden—open discussions where each participant could freely express his or her ideas without feeling intimidated, the mutual respect displayed during discussion of divergent views, the priority given to the contextual needs of the community and, most importantly, keeping the purpose of the project foremost in mind—reminded me of the process of curriculum planning in the faculty. Just as the views of all role players in the food garden project were considered to be worthy of discussion to achieve a sense of ownership and to work towards a shared vision, so the crafting of a humanising curriculum requires a similar approach to fully realise the vision and mission of the faculty and the institution. Some of the salient aspects of a humanising pedagogy that resonated in me when recalling my experience of observing the creation of the garden by the participants were:

- A community working together for a common good
- The dynamism and energy displayed by the participants
- A sense of ownership and accountability to each other
- Sharing of experience and learning from each other
- Co-construction of a food garden
- The choice of plants and fruit trees to suit the needs of the community
- Bringing in experts from outside the school community when necessary
- Mutual respect and a caring and nurturing environment
- An awareness of sustainability (storing seeds, learning from experience, generating income for the future, etc.).
- Structure, but also freedom and fun in working towards cohesion.

On revisiting my drawing after a few months, I realised that my depiction of the food garden included a perimeter fence, which in the case of a curriculum could represent exclusivity. Similarly, my drawing appeared to be too structured, displaying a lack of cohesion between the various components. The thought occurred to me that the cohesion among the various components (modules and activities) of a programme must be made explicit to both educators and learners. A caring community working together, visibly expressing a desire for nurturing and growth, emerged as a common theme in the exhibit where my drawing was placed together with two drawings from my colleagues (Fig 3.2). One of the aspects that had not been expressed in my drawing was the fun aspect of learning. It dawned on me that while focusing on the purpose and structure of the curriculum, one should be aware of the influence of the affective dimensions on teaching and learning.

Promoting and catering for diversity and common growth in changing contexts

The diversity of the teaching and learning communities (gender, culture, age, etc.) was made quite explicit in one of the drawings—an important consideration in the South African context. The blending of the learning communities in a harmonious manner was eloquently captured in the conversation of colleagues who viewed our exhibit:

> *There is man and the natural environment living in harmony, people, young and old . . . diverse coming together to work together in the soil, in nurturing what is living around them so that it will grow, produce, set seed, and grow again—a continuous cycle of living.*

The metaphoric representation of the seasons, a lifecycle, including a dormant period required for regeneration and growth, indicates the dynamic nature of a curriculum in changing contexts.

Transforming of the self

The collaborative engagement with my colleagues and a critical self-examination of my views enriched my perspectives on what humanising pedagogy should be in teaching and learning. I realised that we learn from each other. The inner transformation in me with respect to my conceptions of humanising pedagogy occurred at two levels—at a subliminal level, when I participated in presentations and group discussions, and at a more concrete and deliberative level when I started engaging with my own views of humanising pedagogy in relation to the views of my colleagues and started to write about it.

Denise: Learning in and from and about Community

So what is a humanising pedagogy? The story unfolds as follows:

Community is central and is achieved in different ways

In my drawing (Fig 4.1), I wanted to depict the concept of community as central to a humanising pedagogy. I drew a fire in the middle and a community in a circle around the fire. The fire at the heart represents passion and life-giving energy, and links with the concept of the Abakhwezeli. I drew a group of people diverse in ages, in gender, in dispositions, and with different interests. Also in the picture, are a large pot of food and a tray of fruit and bread. Around the centre, are an assortment of homes or dwellings as well as a school, a soccer field, playgrounds, people and children, a garden, trees, and animals. There are also roads leading to the centre from different directions—different walks of life. I wanted to represent that a humanising pedagogy is made up of the ordinary, life-sustaining, everydayness that it means to live together as human beings.

Various actions are important—meeting regularly, dialogue, listening, and mutual decision making

In looking at it a few months later, I also reflected on the deeper underlying message that a humanising pedagogy can only happen in a context that feeds our humanity in different ways: diversity, coming together regularly, playing, and eating together, dialogue, listening, and taking decisions together. I noticed too, that there are many things that are not in the picture—perhaps this represents the null curriculum?

Figure 4.1: "Learning in and from and about Community"

Fig 4.2 "Humanising is 'Becoming'"

Human agency, action, giving, receiving, and vulnerability

There are four drawings in the theme in which my picture was placed (Fig 4.2). On reexamination I found the first drawing, entitled "Interconnectedness," to be deeply symbolic and meaningful in understanding the concept of a humanising pedagogy. Against the backdrop of an outstretched traced hand is a set of three spirals, each one connected to the other, each layer containing a different element: learner, teacher, and teaching and learning. I am struck by how much these elements resonate with the I–Thou–It framework that has enabled meaning making in our reflections and previous work on a humanising pedagogy. The background of the hand acts as a symbol of human agency and action, of giving and receiving, and of vulnerability—and so, as a metaphoric container for the image and actions of humanising pedagogical work.

Equality and sincerity

The second drawing, "Hands of Equity and Sincereness," picks up on a subliminal theme running through many of the pictures. The symbolism that stands out for me in this drawing is the action of reaching out and opening up that spans the spaces that divide people and keeps them apart. The image also shows this going both ways—a reciprocity. At the bottom of the drawing is a pair of feet between a set of arrows that indicate a direction forward, symbolising intentionality and action, a sense of moving ahead, not backward or sideways. The title of the picture emphasises the values of equality and sincerity as necessary elements of the praxis of a humanising pedagogy.

Ubuntu—people first through sharing towards becoming

The third drawing introduced an indigenous concept, Batho Pele[9], which comes from the Sotho and isiZulu to mean, people first. The drawing depicts two groups of people sharing what they have. The principle is explicitly stated by the artist underneath the drawing, encouraging the viewer: "If you have, learn to share with those who don't have. Let's learn the Batho Pele principle." The drawing is entitled "Teaching and Learning Should be about Sharing."

Reflecting on this a few months later, I am struck by the importance of indigenising the concept of a humanising pedagogy—in other words, giving it local meaning. By relating it to a principle known and "owned" locally, the concept is a recognisable one, not ascribed to some foreign intellectual or project outside of our own daily, lived experience. This realisation was an epiphanous moment. It connected with several other experiences and questions that had come up for me when encountering, on previous engagements in this work, an inexplicable resistance to the concept by some educators I knew otherwise to be oriented to a humanising pedagogy. There seemed to be a need to rename the concept something else, for example, in arguments like: "Isn't it the just the same thing as ubuntu, and why can't we just call it that?" and "Why must we use this complicated term, we are already doing this in our classrooms, just not calling it that." Given the centrality of the concept and philosophy to our work, this realisation about how we name a humanising pedagogy is a transformational learning for me. The substance of this drawing also extends the idea of reciprocity and generosity hinted at in the previous picture . . . to include a symbiotic element, a dependence on interdependence—also, the fundamental connection between Batho Pele and a humanising pedagogy: it is, indeed, about people first.

The overall theme "Humanising is 'Becoming'" captures our collective transformative learning: a deep vision and understanding of the essence of a humanising pedagogy, the symbolic idea of giving and receiving, taking responsibility and co-constructing learning through agency and action. The spiral and its fractal iterations—always becoming. This was why we decided to position the pictures in such a way that they represented an action learning cycle. And so our learning about a humanising pedagogy continues.

Discussion

It is evident from the findings section that as four authors, our engagement in cycles of individual and mutual reflection on our drawings and the topic of a humanising pedagogy enabled us to "move beyond our own preconceived theories and subjective biases, towards representing multiple voices" (Finlay, 2002, p. 219). Our collective awareness began to develop during discussions in the mutual collaboration (Finlay, 2002) phase of our reflexive cycle. We confirmed that metaphors are inspired by a context or an embedded experience. Tidwell and Manke (2009, p. 150 as cited by Pithouse 2011, p. 41) stated that, "this recursive reflective process really helped us think about the meaning within our metaphoric representations." This mirrors our experience of the reflexive process because each of us chose visual representations that connected to a previous experience or context that encapsulated a way of visually depicting a humanising pedagogy, an aspect to which we will return shortly when presenting Table 1. However, in our deliberations together we all acknowledged that a metaphor does not necessarily encapsulate everything—it doesn't represent all of reality, but highlights some aspects of reality. Naming this limitation was important because in Phase 2, a number of us deliberated on some missing aspects or took cognisance of further individual observations in group conversations that may have not been our original intention. For example, Raj mentioned the perimeter fence and the affective aspect, learning is fun, and Kathija reviewed

[9] This is a well-known phrase in the South African context because it was utilised by the new government as a set of principles to encourage excellence in service delivery. The drawing depicts two groups of people sharing what they have.

mechanistic conformity. This enabled each of us to acknowledge the limitations of the metaphor while also reflecting on what these could mean for praxis.

The idea that a humanising pedagogy relates to what happens in a community, and the connections between human beings, enabled us to connect this to the concept of ubuntu—one of NMMU's explicitly highlighted values—to be cognisant of this element, which both creates and sustains the community. It is a value perspective supported by Salazar (2013), Bartolomé (1994), Huerta (2011), and Roberts (2000), who contended that the cultural, linguistic, and familial resources are valued in a humanising pedagogy, and that "students should develop pride in the strengths and contributions of their communities" (Salazar 2013, p. 138). These ideas resonated with various subthemes in the different reflective pieces, like community, agency, and ubuntu (Denise), collaboration and sharing of experiential knowledge with support and co-construction of knowledge (Raj), togetherness (Kathija) and sharing and receiving (André). In addition, the metaphors that depicted activities like rowing, creating a food garden, extending of hands, and communities working together, provided insights into planning and making choices and decisions together as inclusion and equality of all in a community, and that this should also be embodied in humanising pedagogy in classrooms. The links to the concept of ubuntu, integral to the notion of community and the interdependence of its members, made it clear why a humanising pedagogy should not be seen as a foreign concept in an African context. The Batho Pele metaphor drawing drew on the African principle of people first as an obvious and inherent quality of a humanising pedagogy. This discussion highlighted the new learning about the importance of indigenising the concept, itself a principal objective of a humanising pedagogy, in the sense that a liberating teaching and learning project has to ensure that knowledge is owned by the learner. This represents a vital moment for the group because it suggests that we also need to find and include space for various namings and representations of knowledge.

In our discussions, Raj's opening comments about his experience began with his recollection of bringing together a community, from fracture to wholeness, which linked directly with Freire's re-humanisation project (see also Odora-Hoppers & Richards, 2011, Ch. 6) and a critical pedagogy, which is vital in the South African context. André's reflections on how to promote co-learning and rethinking of our current power relationships to challenge a position where we as academic lecturers see ourselves as bigger than our students, bigger in the sense of being more knowledgeable in our subject as well as in terms of experiences, connects with the views of Keet et al. (2009, p. 111), who highlighted that the "varied political, socioeconomic and cultural frames through which a diverse group of individuals mediate their own pedagogical engagement in a troubled context . . . is characterised by asymmetrical power relations." The reflections of various members of the group, as well as the drawings that depict the notion of openness and reciprocity, of giving and receiving, also connect these ideas with the concept of mutual vulnerability, which requires that teachers and learners open up and challenge their "meaning-making frames and default-drives" to critical reflection (Keet et al., 2009, p. 112). Raj invokes the idea of a larger set of objectives beyond those of the classroom and teacher when he reflects on taking into account the needs of the community at large.

A strong theme that emerged from the collective reflections and discussion was that learning happens in cycles (in fact, unending cycles) within which the importance of a dormant period emerged. This is reminiscent of the non-linear Theory U (Scharmer, 2007), recognising that time is needed to think, to sense, and be fully present in the process of new learning before one can be generative. Raj's reflection on a quote from a group conversation resonated with all of our thinking: the metaphoric representation of seasons as a life cycle, made apparent a dormant period, which is also required for regeneration and growth, and indicates the dynamic nature of a curriculum to changing contexts. The notion that learning is cyclical is reflected in several of the discussions, and

informed how we think about our curriculum; indeed, the notion of a spiral curriculum (Bruner, 1960), as well as the reflective action learning cycle (Schön, 1983), have become central themes and organising principles within our renewed curricula. We also consider this self-study project as a way of stepping back and thinking about our thinking: a time to find a dormant space for thinking, absorbing, sorting, and regenerating before moving forward. Such a motion is also depicted in the movement of rowing metaphor chosen by Kathija, where there is a cycle of movement that includes a moment of pause.

It can be said in reviewing all that has been described as findings in this study, Gidden's (1990, p. 38) observation, "the reflexivity of modern social life consists in the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constantly altering their character," resonates with this experience. In the process of developing shared understandings of the concept of a humanising pedagogy, we concur with Cunliffe (2003, p. 991) that it involves "acknowledging the constitutive nature of our research conversations; constructing emerging practical theories rather than objective truths; exposing the situated nature of accounts through narrative circularity; focusing on life and research as a process of becoming rather than an already established truth." This is in line with Mezirow's (1997, p. 7) processes of transformative learning where with transformed viewpoints, we also become "aware and critically reflective of our generalised bias in the way we view groups other than our own."

Having said all of the above, it is important to conclude by presenting key aspects pertaining to the *what, how*, and *why* of a humanising pedagogy—realising humanising pedagogy in practice. As a result of embracing the ideas of Mezirow's (2000, p. 22, cited by Papastamatis & Panitsides, 2014, p. 76) 10-stage model, our critical reflections and reflexive dialogue (Pithouse-Morgan & van Laren, 2012), and our interactions with one another, we are able to commence on a journey that actualises our conceptions pertaining to the what, how, and why of a humanising pedagogy. Mezirow's perspective (2000, p. 22, cited by Papastamatis & Panitsides, 2014) enabled us not only to rethink and modify our existing understandings (Finlay, 2002), but it enabled us to confront and transform our existing thinking and possible biases (Mezirow, 1997) including so-called truths (Cunliffe, 2003) that can become beliefs. As such, our reflective writings have enabled us to construct a shared understanding of possible aspects that can be taken into consideration pertaining to the praxis of a humanising pedagogy by focusing on the what, how and why: what a humanising pedagogy is promoting; how it could be promoted, and; why it is important to promote it.

The above has been conceptualised based upon the data presented in the findings section and is presented below in Table 1. The key aspects have been indicated and are linked to the main ideas from the four participants. Table 1 suggests that humanising pedagogy is promoting collaboration, sharing, and co-learning from both the student's and the lecturer's sides by acknowledging at the same time that promoting diversity and embracing the knowledge that resides in all human beings is important. Hence, it is about transforming our existing thinking, beliefs, values, and attitudes because: I am because you are—the ubuntu dimension.

Table 1: Shared Understandings of the Praxis of a Humanising Pedagogy (HP)

	Key aspects of HP identified	Kathija	André	Raj	Denise
HP is promoting WHAT?	Collaboration Sharing Co-learning Transforming Ubuntu Diversity	Connection among human beings via collaboration and sharing	Co-learning through input from all and, disagreements are part of life	Sharing of experience and learning from each other Transforming of the self Promoting and catering for diversity and common growth in changing contexts	Community is central and is achieved in different ways Ubuntu—people first through sharing towards becoming
HP is promoted HOW?	Authenticity Openness Vulnerability Hand-holding Safe spaces Mutual respect Equality Sincerity Needs of all Dialogue Listening Mutual decision making	Authenticity, openness, unique potential, and mutual vulnerability	Embracing different cultural perspectives Leaders are fallible and require hand-holding	Safe space for discussions— mutual respect for divergent viewpoints Preparation of the context because everyone's needs are important	Equality and sincerity Various actions are important— meeting regularly, dialogue, listening, and mutual decision making
HP is important WHY?	Choices Exploration Cohesion Agency	Opening and exploring choices instead of being in control	Being conscious of the other, and of ourselves as not being the sole knower	Structure, but also freedom and fun in working towards cohesion	Human agency, action, giving, receiving, and vulnerability

In order to realise the what, it became evident from the data that to transform existing thinking, beliefs, values, and attitudes with a view to embracing diversity, the what—by means of how—could be realised by promoting and embracing authenticity, openness, hand-holding, creating safe spaces to voice what we think through dialogue—but also by providing time to listen extensively. This brings mutual respect to the fore, including being sincere and engaging with one's students in such a manner that their needs are addressed. Equally important, not only students, but also we as lecturers have to make ourselves vulnerable in order that everyone can become aware of our humanness.

This brings us to the why aspect: a humanising pedagogy is important because it not only confronts us, but also provides us with choices—choices that are different from previous ones—choices that assist us to explore by means of active agency with a view to achieve social humanising cohesion.

Conclusion: Collective Learning and Personal Transformations

We all agree unequivocally that this research and reflexive process enriched our individual and collective understanding of what a humanising pedagogy is—the what. Deeper engagements through introspection, dialogue amongst ourselves as colleagues, and reflections of classroom practices and life experiences have all contributed to a collated understanding from which we all have learned and grown. Such a conclusion is congruent with the aim of self-study that requires reframed thinking, interaction with critical others, and a means of sharing with those who may wish to draw on our findings for their own praxis and reflection. At the same time, our interactions with one another have

enabled us not only to become aware of the complex ways in which a humanising pedagogy may be theorised and practiced within classrooms, even those within the same institution, but they also prompted us to think about key aspects that could assist us to promote the how in order to realise the why and what. Having stated the above, it is evident that humanising pedagogy is a concept that will always call upon dialogue where teaching and learning occur in community, and in living spaces where teachers (lecturers) co-construct and negotiate with students the parameters for and of learning. The continually evolving nature of such a concept requires a paradigm shift because it suggests ongoing reflecting, sharing, and experimenting. Perhaps the how aspect can assist us in moving our thinking and praxis forward in such a manner that we constantly think about ways of how we can realise a humanising pedagogy.

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