



Chapter 9

Grappling with transformation through curriculum development

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Introduction

Transformation in South African Higher Education (HE) is a necessity and must be prioritised. Such transformation includes improved physical access to educational opportunities and epistemological access in ways that promote social justice, improve student learning experiences and better prepare our students for the needs of the broader South African society. This chapter argues that the PGDip in HE contributes to this ambitious transformative goal in two ways. First, the PGDip facilitates engagement with higher education theories that inform evidence-based teaching practices. Second, the Diploma encourages critical reflection. This combination of theory and reflexive practice equips us, as educators, to engage with the complexities of transformation in our teaching practices. Curriculum development is a fundamental component here, but one whose value tends to be underestimated or overlooked. Drawing from a case study example, this chapter illustrates how learning on the PGDip (HE), Curriculum Development Module equipped me as an HE academic and educator to grapple with the complexities of transformation through curriculum development processes on the professional Master's Programme in Counselling Psychology at Rhodes University.

Transformation in HE

South Africa contends with a powerful political history where race, ethnicity, social class and geography were used to perpetuate privilege for a white minority, and language and quality of education were strategically used to protect this privilege (Adonis & Silinda, 2021). Recognising that historically, universities have served the societal elite, Boughey and McKenna (2021) argue that transformation in HE in South Africa is to some extent about making powerful knowledge more broadly accessible, allowing for more social mobility across societal classes. Adonis and Silinda (2021) note that while transformation in South African HE has been disappointingly slow, important changes have occurred, including the growing representation of black and female students in public HE institutions, and the introduction of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to support financially vulnerable students (Adonis & Silinda, 2021). Boughey and McKenna (2021) highlight the sizeable growth in students accessing HE through state universities in South Africa over the past 20 years with figures increasing from under 500,000 to more than one million.

However, Adonis and Silinda (2021) argue that transformation in HE is about more than physical access and admission rates, explaining that graduation and retention rates of students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds, of which the majority are black students, continue to be low. They note that limited transformation in HE institutional culture is an important reason for this, pushing these students to the margins of the academic community. Adonis and Silinda (2021) explain that institutional culture is a culmination of the values, attitudes, interaction styles and the collective memories of an institution that become known through the lived experiences of those who work and study in the institution. Universities are then experienced as “powerful mechanisms of social exclusion and injustice through their internal thinking, structures, cultures and practices” (Adonis & Silinda, 2021: 77).

Within this context, Boughey and McKenna (2021) argue that curriculum development can play a powerful and inclusive transformative role, in addressing deficit conceptions of the

“decontextualised learner” within institutions of HE. They explain that attempts to increase access to HE in South Africa have raised important questions about curriculum content relevance. In particular, curricula have been criticised for the dominance of knowledge emanating from the Global North, and the limited recognition of local knowledge.

A transformative approach towards a more socially just and decolonised curriculum would mean developing curricula that address the lived experiences of South African people, centring scholarship emerging in and about South Africa, and Africa more broadly, that challenges the notion that the only legitimate specialist knowledge emanates from the Global North (Boughey & McKenna, 2021).

Rhodes University Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education: Curriculum Development Module

The Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education - PGDip (HE) (hereafter, the PGDip) offered at Rhodes University, is a 120-credit, honours-level (NQF 8) – National Qualifications Framework - course offered through the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL). The course comprises four compulsory modules (Learning and Teaching in HE; Curriculum Development; Assessment of and for Student Learning, and Evaluation of Teaching Courses) and one elective. The diploma aims to develop reflexive HE practitioners and is assessed through a teaching portfolio submitted on completion, to assess participants’ capacity to apply course concepts and processes to their disciplinary teaching contexts. Formative assessments are submitted at the end of each module, in the form of written assignments.

Curriculum Development is the second module presented on the PGDip programme, following an introductory module on Learning and Teaching in HE. The purpose of the module is to build theoretical understandings about curriculum development in HE settings and develop skills in designing, interpreting and implementing curricula using an outcomes-based and learning-focused framework. The module comprises 10, two-hour seminars presented over one week through face-to-face engagements,

further informed by prescribed readings, and holds a credit weighting of 30. Learning outcomes include the ability to draw from HE theories and concepts to critically analyse, reflect on and evaluate approaches to curriculum development; and redesign courses and modules to align learning outcomes with socially just pedagogies that improve epistemological access for diverse students. Broad themes of the module include engagement with theoretical understandings of curriculum as a concept, factors that influence curriculum development and curriculum alignment.

The Professional Master's Programme in Counselling Psychology

The Rhodes University Professional Master's in Counselling Psychology (MCP) programme is a two-year combined, coursework and research Master's degree (NQF 9) that includes three components: one year of coursework, a mini-thesis dissertation, and a one-year practical internship completed at the Rhodes University Student Counselling Centre (SCC). The programme is accredited by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) and leads to professional registration as a Counselling Psychologist in independent practice, in South Africa, after obtaining a 70% pass in the HPCSA professional board examination.

Having contextualised the Rhodes University PGDip (HE) and its goal to develop theoretically informed and critically reflexive teaching practitioners, the remainder of this chapter illustrates how theoretical learnings and reflexive practice on this module, equipped me, as an educator, who co-ordinates and teaches on the MCP programme to grapple with the complexities of transformation on the programme at our university. The discussion is structured in two parts. Part 1 examines different definitions and conceptions of curriculum, and uses reflexivity to consider the concept of curriculum in context. This context is then used to grapple with transformation on the MCP programme while recognising powerful stakeholders across international, national, professional, institutional and student levels. Part 2 uses the concept of constructive alignment and reflexivity as a

tool in managing these different contextual levels of influence in curriculum development on the MCP programme.

Theoretically defining the concept of curriculum, and reflecting on its implementation in context, to inform evidence-based teaching practices on the programme

Curriculum is a complex term. Fraser and Bosanquet (2006) propose using a categorical approach to define curriculum where a product-driven definition would focus on course content, and a process-driven definition would recognise that curricula exist within broader contexts, where teaching and learning processes interact. Before engaging with the reading materials on the PGDip Curriculum Development module, I would have embraced a product-driven definition. This narrow, technical definition explains curriculum as a single course's syllabus; a description of its content; or the structure of a whole programme of teaching that explains how courses or modules fit together (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). It is practical, easily applicable and often argued to be decontextualised, although it remains embedded in broader social processes.

However, Boughey and McKenna (2021) explain that curriculum could also be understood as the way in which an HE institution distributes its knowledge, in the form of the planned and the enacted curriculum. They note that the chosen topics being taught, the reading materials prescribed in understanding these topics, the authors of these works, the identities of the educators teaching the materials and the learners being inducted into the discipline, as well as the learning behaviours deemed socially acceptable or not, all form important aspects of the curriculum and shape a sense of belonging within the learning environment. It had not occurred to me that curriculum could be enacted. Through reflective exercises on the PGDip in HE course, and considering a more process-driven definition of curriculum, I began to wonder what was being enacted on our MCP programme through our curriculum choices.

Desai (2012) and Garuba (2015) remind us that there is a far broader context within which knowledge production and

learning occur. Curriculum is a social product that is highly influenced by context. There is considerable power in the decisions made about what types of knowledge are endorsed and legitimised through inclusion in a curriculum, and how these decisions influence a discipline and its professional practice over time. For example, on the MCP programme, teaching staff make choices about the content of particular courses, the focus of these seminars, the reading materials chosen to guide student learning, and pedagogical choices to promote relational ways of engagement. Some of these teaching resources continue to be drawn from the Global North and promote context-specific understandings and applications of therapeutic and assessment practices. These approaches do not adequately equip our students for practice in the South African context. They also legitimise North American and Eurocentric knowledge as superior to our indigenous knowledge, communicating this to our students through our curriculum choices. Yet locally developed materials are not necessarily always accessible or available, or soon become outdated, leaving me as an educator in the challenging position of not knowing how best to equip my students to meet the learning outcomes and graduate attributes of the programme.

Garuba (2015) provides some practical advice, urging an integration of diversity in the selection of voices, authors, positions and knowledge sources when constructing a curriculum. Further to this point, Ratele (2024:470) advises that teachers of psychology orientate their students to the knowledge sources which they are drawing from, explicitly stating that this is a “Psychology that situates and is situated in” an African, non-African or US (United States) society. This is a powerful point, because as Desai (2012) notes, curriculum is developed with a particular type of student audience in mind. The discipline of psychology conceptualises mental health, well-being, psychopathology, psychotherapy and support in specific ways that typically draw from knowledge emanating from the Global North, often negating African wisdom and healing practices. Ironically, these indigenous knowledge systems are sometimes what inspires our students to pursue professional training in psychology. If my intention as an educator is to equip my students with specialist knowledge and skills to develop proficiency in our

South African context as professional Counselling Psychologists, then the curriculum I have influence over developing, must address a sense of belonging and acceptance of our students, through the knowledge sources that I choose to legitimise.

Boughey and McKenna (2021) note that when grappling with the considerable task of transformation in curriculum development, educators must ask:

1. What is being legitimised by the current curriculum?
2. Who (as knowers) are being legitimised?
3. In what ways are these knowledge sources and knowers being legitimised?

Using these three questions, the discussion that follows considers different levels of influence at international, national, institutional, disciplinary and student body levels that impact on curriculum develop on the MCP programme at Rhodes University.

International level

Our programme seeks to align itself with a global understanding of what counselling psychology is and does. In so doing we legitimise this programme as aligning with international best practices and standards. Counselling psychology is a globally recognised category of professional, applied psychological practice that typically focuses on a non-pathological approach to distress (Lee, 2019). The category seeks to understand a person in relation to lifespan development, personal strengths, resiliency and protective factors, positioning the person in context (Lee, 2019). Consequently, our professional programme includes courses on lifespan development, community psychology, and cultural competencies, aligning with international guidelines and values. Not all counselling psychology programmes embrace these guidelines, yet they do to some extent, legitimise the category internationally and can potentially constrain the curriculum to what is internationally defined as the realm of counselling psychology, marginalising context-specific needs such as the important role that Africa(n)-centred psychology could and should play on the MCP programme.

Importantly, the category of Counselling Psychology has come under criticism internationally for needing to demonstrate its relevance and meaningfulness. In response, scholarship has emerged, arguing for the relevance of Counselling Psychology globally, and more specifically in South Africa (see for example Young, 2013; Bantjes et al., 2016; Haine et al., 2023). This criticism has provided the opportunity to consider how to transform Counselling Psychology to be more responsive to global and local mental healthcare needs. Our programme offers a three-seminar workshop that specifically addresses the identity and professional practice of counselling psychologists in our country because of this debate.

National level

Mamdani (2008) reminds us how political changes shape the development of HE institutions, academic disciplines and their curricula. Counselling psychology first emerged in this country at Stellenbosch University and was introduced as a way of mentoring and guiding the career development of university students. Assessment tools and interventions were deliberately used to privilege white, and particularly Afrikaans-speaking South Africans (Bantjes et al., 2016). These discriminatory origins mean that the category has much to make up for, as it attempts to establish its relevance in a democratic South Africa. Broadening access to mental healthcare services requires multilingual practitioners with strong cultural competencies who are able to apply their skills across a range of languages and contexts to promote equality and social justice. This reality shapes the criteria which we use when selecting new applicants into the professional programme, and the language and cultural competencies of the academic and case supervision staff appointed to the programme, legitimising the importance of multilingualism for the category. The curriculum includes a course focused on developing cultural competencies such as working with marginalised groups, sexual- and gender-diverse individuals, and understanding race and ethnicity, drawing from South African research and prescribed reading materials. In these examples, we see how the curriculum is attempting to be responsive to the political landscape in South

Africa by using specialist knowledge created and developed in our unique context that addresses the lived experiences of the South African majority. However, the programme continues to be taught exclusively in English, which is problematic, considering that we are educating our students in talk-therapy interventions.

Professional level

The recurring question of relevance of Counselling Psychology is a prominent theme at the professional level in our country too, where registration as a Counselling Psychologist is regulated by the Professional Board of Psychology of the HPCSA. A guide of minimum training requirements was recently published by the Professional Board of Psychology (2019) defining Counselling Psychology and the specific areas of focus and practice for South African Counselling Psychologists. These minimum competencies align with international guidelines, and are a requirement on professional Counselling Psychology training programmes at South African universities for programmes to maintain HPCSA compliance and accreditation. In so doing, these programmes maintain legitimacy as providing the necessary quality of training to produce competent South African Counselling Psychologists.

In the preceding discussion, we have seen the influence of key stakeholders at international, national and professional levels, on curriculum development. Their viewpoints and the decisions that they make about the profession have a powerful impact on what types of knowledge are legitimised, impacting powerfully on the way in which future Counselling Psychologists are trained and shaped. Toohey (1999) speaks of curriculum ideologies or the values and beliefs that influence curriculum decisions. She explains that those placed in positions of power to decide on curriculum content are influenced by cultural and political views and previous experiences of education that shape their decision-making. The curriculum ideologies that result, are seen in the teaching and learning strategies employed on a programme, assessment methods, course objectives and pedagogy (1999). Knowledge on these professional programmes is influenced by international guidelines pertaining to best practice, guided by government policy, and regulated by the HPCSA Professional

Board of Psychology. This top-down regulatory structure makes it challenging to rethink curriculum assumptions.

Institutional

Institutional influences further shape curriculum development on our MCP programme. Rhodes University's Institutional Development Plan (Rhodes University Council, 2018:13) aims to be "locally responsive and globally influential and impactful" through a nexus of teaching, research and community engagement. The University's community engagement initiative positions social justice and social responsibility as key components of education, with an emphasis on democratic citizenship. Here, students develop greater social awareness of their responsibilities to use their educational opportunities to improve broader society. Community-based service learning (CBSL) is a useful vehicle for such learning because it allows students to apply theoretical learnings in practice, in socially responsive ways (Akhurst & Mitchell, 2022), building graduates who become professionals who are more likely to promote and integrate social justice into their professional lives.

Aligning with the University's institutional development goals, the MCP programme has sought to integrate CBSL into its curriculum through community-based partnerships, an example of which is the Joza Assumption Development Centre (ADC). The ADC is an economic empowerment NGO (non-governmental organisation) focused on skills training and small business development. The NGO is situated in Joza, the largest township in Makhanda, where Rhodes University is located. In response to the priorities identified by the Joza community, the ADC aims to transform the Joza economy by supporting young people's entrepreneurship. However, the mental health consequences of longstanding social and structural inequalities, have created an important need for mental health support and services at the centre. The MCP programme has been responsive to this need by partnering with the ADC in providing individual counselling services, psychosocial workshops and group therapy interventions on site, through our student psychologists. Gaps and challenges experienced by our students in applying theory-in-practice

at the ADC inform curriculum development decisions on the programme, including the content of courses and the sequences in which particular training and workshops occur.

The integration of this CBSL partnership as a fixture in the MCP curriculum legitimises the prominent role that community psychology plays in the training of our students as emerging Counselling Psychologists, and the specialist knowledge needed to competently implement this work. This is an important recognition because community psychology tends to be marginalised in mainstream psychology. The legitimising of the specialistic knowledge of the ADC, as our CBSL partner, in guiding intervention needs in our CBSL component on the MCP programme is also an important recognition of the central role that partnership, and local knowledge plays in effective community-engaged work.

Discipline

Psychology as a discipline is in flux with a recognised need for transformation (Malherbe et al., 2024). Practitioners and scholars are grappling with and challenging the relevance of the profession (see for example Bowman et al., 2024), which has historically drawn from the Global North and the biomedical model to conceptualise mental health, distress and pathology. However, these context-specific conceptualisations of psychology miss the considerable social and structural inequalities that the typical South African contends with (see for example work by Lund et al., 2018 and Pillay et al., 2013). These inequalities impact profoundly on mental health and well-being. These same context-specific conceptualisations of psychology also negate indigenous South African knowledge systems that guide local explanatory illness and help-seeking models. One criticism over the years has been the degree to which professional training in psychology moulds professionals to meet the mental health needs of a small minority of wealthy South Africans who are protected from these social and structural inequalities, which burden the South African majority (Bowman et al., 2024). Many psychologists are not equipped in their professional training with theoretical frameworks and applied practical experience to competently conceptualise and

intervene with distress formulated within a social action or liberation model (Akhurst, 2022).

Community psychology is a major course in the MCP programme at Rhodes University, providing students with a theoretical lens, framework and orientation towards psychological intervention that challenges many of the typical biomedical conceptions of how to bring about health and well-being. With a specific focus on being partnership-orientated, this theoretical approach promotes understanding of mental health needs and priorities, within a social action / social liberation model that recognises and emphasises the impact of social and structural inequalities (Akhurst, 2022). Intervention is focused on addressing the needs as identified by the community partner, within their particular context, and challenges the psychologist to work in collaboration with their community partner to bring about interventions that meet these needs (Akhurst & Msomi, 2022). In so doing, the psychologist respects and promotes the community partner's agency for change. One of the most practical, concretely visible ways in which this approach is applied, is by taking psychology to the community partner, in their physical setting. While most South African professional training programmes offer a community psychology component, few currently integrate this with a service-learning component. However, CBSL is an effective vehicle for teaching the principles and practice of community psychology and provides a transformative example of how psychology could (and should) be practiced in South Africa.

Student level

One final contextual level that must be acknowledged on the MCP programme at Rhodes is the students. I've noted in the discussions that precede this section that the curriculum ideologies that ultimately dictate the content of our programme, also influence who applies for the course, and the type of candidate who we cater to. Historically the programme has favoured an English-speaking white minority, but in meeting global, national, professional and institutional calls for relevance, the programme has sought to attract a far broader demographic of students over the past 15 years including multilingual, academically excellent students

with already-established cultural competencies and a willingness to build on these to develop the discipline further. These are high expectations that we place on our students, that require a curriculum that aligns with these values and intentions.

Luckett (2010:17) reminds us that “curriculum practices construct particular identities and forms of agency for students”. Student Counselling Psychologists on our programme are developing a professional identity through engagement with the curriculum. Therefore, to meet the goal of equipping these students as future leaders in the profession, this curriculum must not only provide abstract and specialised knowledge about Counselling Psychology as a practice, but also teach students about contextually sensitive application, while supporting and validating their professional identity development (Luckett, 2010). Finding this balance in a curriculum with so many influential levels of stakeholders is a significant challenge. Drawing from the concept of constructive alignment (Biggs 1999) in curriculum development proved a useful tool in finding this balance and establishing congruence across these macro, meso and micro levels. Part two of this chapter provides an illustration of this application.

Using constructive alignment and reflexivity to manage these contextual levels of influence in curriculum development on the MCP Programme.

Biggs’ (1999) concept of constructive alignment is the process of considering the extent to which the teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks used in a curriculum meet the learning outcomes intended for the qualification. Constructive alignment, a key thread in the PGDip, proved to be a useful tool for curriculum development on the MCP programme because it provided a framework for managing the different stakeholders and levels of influence discussed in Part 1 above, while still allowing me to grapple meaningfully with transformation on the programme. The purpose of the MCP programme and learning outcomes are discussed and reflected on in terms of their alignment with teaching and learning methods and assessment practices, as well as evaluation procedures.

Purpose of the programme

The purpose of the coursework year of the MCP programme (M1) is to provide Counselling Psychology students with the minimum set of HPCSA regulated competencies (Professional Board of Psychology, 2018) to ethically and professionally perform as Counselling Psychologists in South African contexts. The M1 coursework curriculum is shaped by the definition of Counselling Psychology as mandated by the HPCSA, and minimum competencies outlined by the profession (Professional Board of Psychology, 2018:2)

Counselling psychology is a specialist category within professional psychology that **promotes the personal, social, educational and career functioning and well-being of individuals, couples, families, groups, organisations and communities**. Counselling psychologists assist people with **normal developmental issues**, and also **prevent and alleviate psychological and mental health disorders** that range from **mild to moderate severity**. **Psychological assessment, diagnosis, and formulation** draw on a **holistic appreciation of people's lived experiences and their sociocultural contexts**. Counselling psychologists deliver a range of **high-intensity psychological interventions** that take into account the therapeutic potential of **positive relationships, and people's strengths and resources**.

Specific outcomes for the programme

In accordance with HPCSA requirements, the curriculum has been constructed in four parts: psychological assessment; psychological therapies; professional practice; and research. Learning outcomes have been identified in relation with each of these modules. Exit level outcomes outlined by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) are used as further guidelines to divide the curriculum into part 1: competent to apply specialist knowledge applicable to counselling psychology and part 2: competent to apply advanced research techniques in the field of counselling psychology.

A particular strength here is the alignment between HPCSA and SAQA requirements and curriculum content on the programme. The list of minimum competencies required by the HPCSA have been developed into learning outcomes on the programme and are outlined in Table 9.1 and guide the content and structure of our programme curriculum. However, Wheelahan (2007) cautions against heavily competency-based training programmes because of their tendency to oversimplify knowledge. To some extent this critique is relevant on this MCP programme in that such a considerable focus on competencies doesn't leave sufficient room for critical appraisal of the reasoning behind why particular treatment or assessment approaches are chosen, and their relevance in the South African context. Luckett (2010) instead argues for a balance between abstract, specialised forms of knowledge, and contextually considered implications for practice, to allow for the integration of indigenous knowledge systems into knowledge frameworks dominated by thinking from the Global North. This is a potential limitation on the MCP programme which could have negative implications in terms of epistemological access for students while training and as their careers develop. As a consequence the integration of critical African-centred psychology as a course topic will be suggested for next year's curriculum, even though it is not a competency-based requirement of the HPCSA.

Teaching and learning methods and activities

The majority of the teaching in the M1 year takes the form of seminars. The seminars introduce the main theoretical concepts to students and may include student presentations, role plays, videos, Microsoft PowerPoint slides and small group work. Students are required to engage with prescribed and recommended readings beforehand in order to allow for engagement and discussion during contact teaching time. In recent years, more blended learning approaches have been introduced on the programme. One approach that students reported to work particularly well here was when lecturers provided MS PowerPoint presentations with audio commentary before the planned seminar contact time as part of the students'

preparation time and used the contact time, not to revise the materials but rather for practical application in the form of role plays and class discussion.

A second important teaching and learning strategy on the course is case work and supervision. From the second term, students begin carrying a therapeutic case load where they apply their learnings about psychological therapies and assessment practices to clinical cases. Casework is closely monitored by a casework supervisor who students meet with weekly in two-hour paired supervision sessions. Here, video or audio-recordings of case materials are reviewed by the supervisor along with written case reports and students receive feedback to improve their interview and assessment skills, diagnostics, case formulation and treatment intervention skills.

In terms of growing epistemological access, an important consideration would be the integration of more varied languages of instruction used to teach on the course, in role play exercises and in the case supervision space. Having the opportunity to watch a psychologist role play a therapy session in isiXhosa, applying psychotherapy techniques in the language would be a considerable learning opportunity, as would the observation of a psychologist completing a scholastic assessment in Afrikaans or isiZulu.

Provisional assessment criteria

Academic performance and applied clinical practice are assessed throughout the M1 coursework year. These assessments take the form of learning-focused assessments which include summative and formative assessments. The summative assessments are intended to measure learning against a set of published criteria and rubrics, while the formative assessments aim to develop learning through constructive feedback. These forms of assessment are required in all course assessments, aligning with the Rhodes University Policy on Assessment and Student Learning (2019) which promotes the use of transparent assessment criteria that provide an opportunity for discussion and engagement with learning expectations and outcomes. The assessment criteria relevant to the broad learning outcomes on the professional

programme are summarised in Table 9.1, and correspond to related teaching and learning activities and assessment activities. These assessment activities include the following.

Formative assessments:

- **Clinical supervision work** where students meet in pairs with a casework supervisor who reviews client case reports, recorded video extracts of therapy sessions, and assesses live engagements with students during supervision sessions.
- **Written case reports** where students provide detailed case reports of each therapeutic and assessment client assigned to them. These reports are reviewed by supervisors and used to assess professional development on a regular, ongoing basis.
- **Case conference presentations** where each student presents one case where they demonstrate their skills integrating psychological therapies, diagnostics, case formulations and treatment plans, and field questions and feedback from peers and lecturers. These presentations provide an informal opportunity for course co-ordinators to assess students' abilities to present and defend their psychological opinions.

Summative assessments:

- **Coursework written assignments** which students complete throughout the year comprise a psychodiagnostics test, ethics, community psychology and lifespan development essays which assess students' application of psychological theories and theoretical constructs. These assignments count 5% towards year end mark.
- **Oral examinations** where students are required to review case materials from a video, then provide a diagnosis, case formulation and treatment plan within a limited timeframe, and answer relevant questions relating to clinical aspects of the case. The Oral Exams each count 10% towards the students' total year-end mark.
- **Research proposals** are completed in preparation for the minor research dissertation portion of the degree. Proposals are assessed on the quality of the planned research project in terms of coherence of the proposal, appropriate consideration of the context and literature of the topic, clear goals and

appropriate methods to answer the research questions, ethical considerations, constitutionality, style and structure. Proposal marks count 5% towards the student's final year end mark. These proposals form part of a learning-orientated assessment approach which provides students with initial support for writing their summative research dissertations later on.

- **Year-end written examinations** evaluate academic competencies in psychological assessment, psychological therapies and professional practice. Each exam counts 7% towards the final year mark.

Reflecting on this assessment process, there is strong alignment between learning outcomes (guided by HPCSA and SAQA) and these assessment criteria and activities. But one limitation is the extent to which language supports and challenges learning on the MCP programme. The programme specifically targets multilingual students with the intention of training these students to apply therapeutic interventions across a range of contexts, in different languages. Yet students are taught and assessed in English while being encouraged to apply interventions in a range of other languages including isiXhosa and Afrikaans. This places a considerable academic burden on students as they are taught in one language, then grapple with the translation and application of terms and concepts in other languages in client processes, only to have to reintegrate and translate that learning back into English in case supervision sessions, written reports, oral examinations and written examinations. Current assessment techniques do not adequately take this sophisticated task-shifting process into consideration. One consideration would be to include a multilingual component in case supervision where students have the opportunity to formulate casework in Afrikaans or isiXhosa with their supervisor, in alignment with the language of psychotherapy intervention which they are using with that client, and to promote multilingualism in the oral examinations.

Evaluation of the programme

The MCP programme is evaluated regularly, including HPCSA inspections every five years; annual external examiner reports,

and student feedback each term using course evaluation forms. Feedback from the most recent HPCSA inspection reported excellent constructive alignment across our learning outcomes (shaped by HPCSA and SAQA requirements) and our teaching and learning activities, assessment criteria and assessment activities as demonstrated in Table 9.1. Similar feedback was received from our external examiner. Emerging from both these sources, one area to develop was more congruence between the intention to train multicultural practitioners, and the need to teach trainees in ways that support this language development. This feedback aligns closely with the evaluations received by our students and is congruent with my own reflections, illustrating its importance for future curriculum development. The value of reflexivity was highlighted through this evaluation exercise, as an important tool for my own teaching practices – a skill that was developed as a consequence of the professional learning which I obtained through the PGDip.

The learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, assessment criteria and practices on the MCP programme, are summarised in Table 9.1.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter sought to illustrate how the PGDip in HE, Curriculum Development module facilitated my engagement with HE theories that inform evidence-based practices in curriculum development, and developed my skills in critical reflection of the application of these theories in practice. This combination of theory and reflexive practice equipped me to recognise curriculum as both planned and enacted; as well as being deeply contextually embedded and impacted on by powerful stakeholders across international, national, professional, institutional and student levels. This process challenged me as an educator and curriculum developer to consider how my choices legitimise certain specialist knowledge as credible, expert evidence and other forms of specialist knowledge as unscientific, lacking in evidence, to be minimised, excluded and silenced. The conscious recognition of these choices, and their consequences, allowed me to see how curriculum development choices reproduce

Table 1: Constructive alignment on the Master’s in Counselling Psychology programme

Learning Outcomes	Teaching and learning activities	Assessment criteria	Assessment tool / activity
<p>SAQA 1: Competent to apply specialist knowledge applicable to counselling psychology. The course comprised three key coursework modules and a research module with specific learning outcomes in each:</p>		<p>Evidence of an ability to assimilate and apply knowledge to a variety of situations</p>	
<p>MODULE 1: Psychological assessment Knowledge of psychological measurement and psychometric theory Knowledge of a range of psychological issues and problems Competence using ICD and DSM diagnostic systems Ability to conduct a comprehensive intake interview Ability to appropriately select and accurately administer culturally sensitive instruments and norms to assess intellectual, behavioural, emotional, personality, neuropsychological and career functioning. Ability to accurately interpret and integrate data to generate coherent case conceptualisations Ability to formulate useful recommendations Ability to communicate the results and recommendations constructively and accurately Ability to offer a well-supported medico-legal opinion and appropriate expert testimony</p>	<p>Seminars with MS PowerPoint slides and video demonstrations Required readings for self-study and preparation before seminars Practical role plays during class time Casework Clinical supervision</p>	<p>Competently complete at least one adult or child assessment under supervision, which includes conducting a comprehensive intake interview, accurately administering psychometric testing, appropriate application of norms and interpretation of results, diagnosis, case formulation and recommendations, feedback to client. Adequate completion of the end of year examination on psychological assessment</p>	<p>Formative: Clinical supervision progress reports Written case reports Case conference presentation Summative Oral exams End-of-year written exam</p>

Learning Outcomes	Teaching and learning activities	Assessment criteria	Assessment tool / activity
<p>MODULE 2: Psychological therapies</p> <p>Knowledge of the theory and practice of evidence-based models of psychological therapy</p> <p>Ability to formulate and conceptualise cases</p> <p>Ability to plan and implement interventions in varying contexts</p> <p>Demonstrates an appreciation of sociocultural contexts</p> <p>Ability to initiate and sustain mentoring relationships</p> <p>Ability to design and provide psychoeducation, as well as community and public health interventions</p> <p>Ability to facilitate group processes</p> <p>Ability to support and enable vulnerable groups</p> <p>Policy development and programme design</p> <p>Ability to design, manage and evaluate a range of psychologically based programmes in diverse settings and advise on policy Training and Supervision</p> <p>Ability to develop training programmes and to train other practitioners in basic psychological skills and make appropriate use of supervision</p>	<p>Seminars with MS PowerPoint slides and video demonstrations</p> <p>Required readings for self-study and preparation before seminars</p> <p>Practical role plays during class time</p> <p>Group work discussions</p> <p>Casework</p> <p>Clinical supervision</p>	<p>Demonstrates application of appropriate diagnosis, case formulations, psychological therapies, treatment plans to clinical cases, monitored through supervision, case reports, case conference presentations, oral exams and end of year written examination</p> <p>One case conference presentation that demonstrates ability to communicate case conceptualisations in professional manner</p>	<p>Formative: Clinical supervision progress reports</p> <p>Written case reports</p> <p>Case conference presentation</p> <p>Summative Written coursework assignments Oral exams End-of-year written exam</p>

Transforming Teaching in Higher Education

Learning Outcomes	Teaching and learning activities	Assessment criteria	Assessment tool / activity
<p>MODULE 3: Professional practice</p> <p>Knowledge of psychological theories and their application in assessment and intervention</p> <p>Knowledge of the history and values of Counselling Psychology focus on strengths-based development avoiding excessive focus on pathology.</p> <p>Demonstrates understanding that historical, social and contextual factors influence human development and functioning</p> <p>Knowledge of important features of the South African social contexts, and the principles of social justice</p> <p>Ability to work sensitively with marginalised groups</p> <p>Demonstrates reflexivity during and after professional activity</p> <p>Communicates clearly using verbal and written skills in a professional context</p> <p>Forms and maintains productive and respectful relationships with clients, peers/colleagues, supervisors and professionals from other disciplines.</p> <p>Ability to identify and network with local resources and facilities</p> <p>Ability to refer clients to relevant professionals in a variety of systems</p> <p>Competence in information management</p> <p>Ethics and Legislation:</p>	<p>Seminars with MS PowerPoint slides and video demonstrations</p> <p>Required readings for self-study and preparation before seminars</p> <p>Practical role plays during class time</p> <p>Group work discussions</p> <p>Casework</p> <p>Clinical supervision</p>	<p>Successful implementation of a community psychology intervention programme that takes socio-cultural context and factors adequately into account.</p> <p>Adequate completion of the end of year written exam on psychological therapies</p> <p>Demonstration of a growing counselling psychology professional identity in presentations of case materials at case conferences, engagement with teaching staff, colleagues, clients and supervisors, and take-home written examinations</p> <p>Demonstrated ability to communicate a considered psychological opinion confidently</p> <p>Completion of clinical supervision hours where student demonstrates integration of theory into therapeutic practice and competencies as student psychologist</p> <p>Demonstration of professionalism and ethical conduct in case management</p>	<p>Formative: Clinical supervision progress reports Summative Written coursework assignments Oral exams End-of-year written exam</p>

Learning Outcomes	Teaching and learning activities	Assessment criteria	Assessment tool / activity
<p>Demonstrates advanced knowledge and application of the code of professional ethics of the HPCSA and the Professional Board for Psychology and relevant legislative frameworks</p> <p>Ability to act in accordance with these ethical and legal frameworks and understand limitations and boundaries of own professional competence</p>		<p>Adequate completion of two theoretical assignments that demonstrate the ability to apply relevant, evidence-based theory to the professional practice of counselling psychology</p> <p>Adequate completion of the end of year written exam on professional practice</p>	
<p>SAQA 2: Competent to apply advanced research techniques in the field of counselling psychology.</p> <p>Ability to design, manage and conduct ethical and responsible research, utilising quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods</p> <p>Contributes to psychological knowledge, theory and practice, To report on such research, and implement the findings of such research in policy and practice</p>	<p>Seminars with MS PowerPoint slides</p> <p>Required readings for self-study and preparation before seminars</p> <p>Research supervision</p>	<p>Preparation of a research proposal and minor dissertation which is appropriate to the field of counselling psychology and demonstrates:</p> <p>Familiarity with relevant literature</p> <p>Appropriate application of methods and techniques of research</p> <p>Appropriate understanding of the topic and significance of findings</p> <p>Is appropriately presented in terms of literary style and presentation</p>	<p>Formative: Research supervision progress reports Summative Research proposal Thesis</p>

social inequalities or move us towards greater transformation and decolonisation of our disciplines. Through this recognition, I was able to draw on the concept of constructive alignment as a tool to critically reflect on these different contextual levels of influence on the MCP programme. In so doing, I was made aware of valuable strengths but also important areas of development in the curriculum which could be changed to improve epistemological access for our students.

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Chapter 9

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