Chapter 7

Shifting gazes through a PGDip programme: A case study of transformation

Nicholas West

School of Electrical and Information Engineering
University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg, South Africa

Introduction

In the past couple of decades, there has been a steady increase in the development and implementation, in South Africa and abroad, of formal programmes aimed at enhancing academics as university teachers. The Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDipE HE) (hereafter, PGDip) is one such programme. The increase in student numbers coupled with the rising culture of performativity, as well as the increased drive for research output, have placed ever greater demands on academics and have precipitated a true "millennial storm" (Light & Cox, 2000). More than ever before, academics are becoming aware of their role as teachers of their discipline rather than pure discipline experts. This awareness increased during the global coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. University lecturers had to respond and adjust, triage-like, to a new reality of online teaching and assessment (Schultz & DeMers, 2020).

Over the years, there has been a growing body of research around how PGDip programmes have facilitated the development of academic practice (Leibowitz et al., 2016) provide academics with insights and skills to better design and develop curricula

(Quinn & Vorster, 2004) and foster a deeper sense of reflection (Dison, 2016). Although there have been attempts, within the South African context, to research the way that academic identity can be shaped through engagement in structured educational programmes (Benvenuti et al., 2022), the emphasis has mainly been on programmes aimed at academic development professionals (Quinn & Vorster, 2014; Skead, 2018). It is notable that there has been a relative absence, especially within the South African context, of research exploring the transformative potential of PGDip programmes through the personal experience of participating academics. Acknowledging the value of the individual's capacity for knowledge creation through "narrativized accounts [telling] the story of one's learning", the "living 'I'" in educational research (McNiff, 2008:325), can provide valuable insights into the transformative value of the PGDip.

In this chapter, I seek to address the transformative potential of PGDip programmes. The research presented in this chapter is autoethnographic in nature and grew out of the research of my transformative journey as an engineering academic engaged in the PGDip, offered at the University of the Witwatersrand between 2017 and 2018 (West, 2021). The value of the research presented in this chapter, is in the use of Legitimation Code Theory (LCT), and especially the dimension of Semantics to explore the development of a disciplinary expert's gaze towards education. The concept of gazes is examined as an integral aspect of LCT. The dimension of Semantics is explored as an analytical tool making explicit shifts in my written discourse, as a proxy for detecting shifts in my gaze from a disciplinary expert to that of a teacher of the discipline.

Disciplinary experts or teachers of the discipline?

In every practice there is always knowledge to be learnt and someone performing the knowing. This is the main premise of the Legitimation Code Theory. Practices differ in the degree to which knowledge, principles and procedures on the one hand, and attributes and dispositions of knowers within the practice on the other, are emphasised. Practices legitimate organising

principles that are not always empirically observable. These principles are conceptualised as codes. Codes allow one to "move beyond empirical appearances to explore the organising principles, dispositions, practices and contexts" (Maton, 2016:10). Importantly, they allow for distinctions or relations to be drawn between practices. Within practices, one can identify *epistemic relations* (ER) between "knowledge and its proclaimed object" and *social relations* (SR) between "knowledge and its subject, author or actor" (Maton, 2010:43-44). These relations address the question of *what* counts as legitimate knowledge within a practice and *who* can claim to be a legitimate knower or actor within said practice (Maton, 2014b:29).

It follows that in navigating any knowledge practice, one needs to become familiar with what counts as legitimate within it. To be able to recognise the specific organising principles and to successfully realise these in various ways: in the way in which one speaks, writes, thinks, acts. In other words, one starts acquiring a *gaze*, a way of orientating oneself towards the practice. The acquisition of a particular gaze depends as much on the attributes of the subject performing the knowing as it does on the type of interactions which the person has with significant others. These "others" are not limited to physical people. They can be bodies of knowledge and authors of seminal papers. The relative importance of the knower attributes and interactions with significant others yields a continuum of different gazes, ranging from a trained gaze where knower attributes and interactions are less valued through to a born gaze where knower attributes as well as relations with others are indispensable to becoming a legitimate participant in the practice. In Figure 7.1 one can see the different gazes placed along a continuum in relation to the strength of social relations of a particular practice.

Figure 7.1: Continuum of knower gazes as a function of social relations of a practice, adapted from Maton (2014b:95)

Engineers as disciplinary experts

Within the natural sciences, knowledge is created in a hierarchical way by systematically building onto and extending previous knowledge. Specific attributes of the person matter less. What matters more, is engagement with the mutually agreed-upon principles and procedures that support the practice. The field therefore is open to anyone as long as they interact directly with the practice and come to understand how its specific knowledge and procedures are structured.

Engineering is widely known as an applied natural science placing great emphasis on disciplinary knowledge drawn from the natural sciences. Engineering as a profession exists within society and responds to society's needs (Hanrahan, 2014). Engineering can be thought of as applied social science (Vesilind, 2001). Engineers have also been described as "artist/scientists" (Bonasso, 2001:22). The development of specialist engineering knowledge, however, emerges traditionally through engaging systematically with specialist knowledge drawn primarily from the natural sciences.

Design thinking is an integral part of being an engineer. It is an iterative process of enquiry supported by an ability to tolerate and manage ambiguity (Dym et al., 2005). Decision-making, big picture thinking and navigating the social aspects of being part of a team (2005:104) are central to design thinking. In order to develop a gaze towards engineering, the engagement with a hierarchically structured body of knowledge is of central importance, The personal attributes of the engineer (as the knower) as well as interactions with significant others are less important. Becoming an engineer is associated with the development of a *trained gaze* (Maton, 2014b:95) towards engineering.

Teachers of a discipline - the world of education

At first glance, education and engineering seem to share a set of common traits. There is a strong element of reliance on theoretical knowledge. This knowledge is also applied to varied and (sometimes) quite complex classroom contexts. Teaching involves a degree of problem-solving. The knowledge structure characteristic of education is, however, quite different from

engineering. It is not about simply being able to articulate theories and apply them in practice. Being able to draw distinctions and relationships *between* them is what matters more. There is a marked emphasis on learning through interactions with significant others. These "others" can be identified as the authors of seminal texts on education as well as other participants (teachers and students). One can argue that education is characterised predominantly by what is referred to as a *cultivated* gaze (Maton, 2014b:95).

Academics in most cases teach in the manner that they were taught themselves with command of their disciplinary knowledge as their only guide (Machingambi, 2020). Mastery of teaching has traditionally been developed indirectly, often through trial and error, through experience (Kahn, 2017). These thoughts echo the sentiments of McIntyre in his seminal debate with Dunne (McIntyre & Dunne, 2002) on education and teaching. McIntyre's position in this debate is that teaching is not a practice in its own right, being nothing more than a "set of skills and habits put to the service of a variety of practices" (2002:5). Teaching, in McIntyre's view, is simply a conduit that transmits the practice in question (Figure 7.2).

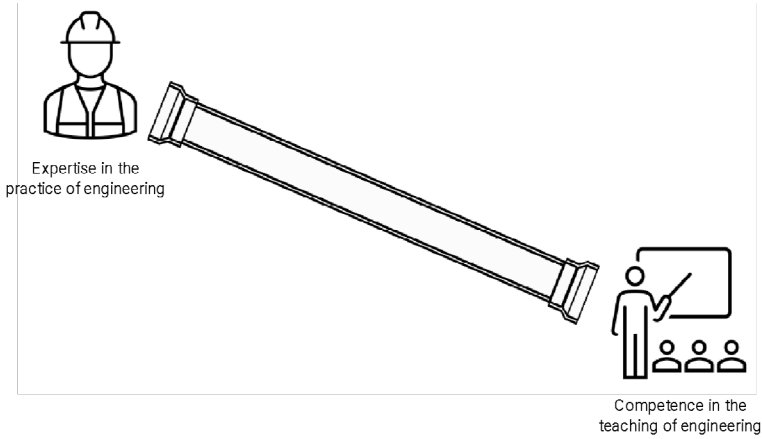

Figure 7.2: Teaching as a "conduit that transmits practice"

The implication of McIntyre's position is that teaching is viewed as devoid of any particular organising principles. Anyone

can teach, provided that they have sufficient command of their particular discipline. In contrast to this position, Dunne maintains, that teaching is and must be, considered a practice in its own right, with its own organising principles, its own history (2002:8). This is also a position famously held by Shulman (1987), who argued that it was necessary for teachers to have what he termed pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). Therefore, being a successful teacher in a specific discipline involves four main elements. First, as also asserted by McIntyre, is a strong understanding of the disciplinary content knowledge to be taught, as well as the ordering principles particular to the discipline. Second, a good teacher needs an understanding of the theoretical perspectives that support teaching: knowledge of learning theories and aspects of pedagogy, assessment and curriculum. Third, from a practical perspective, there is also the importance of engaging with the context-dependent aspects of classroom and student management. Finally, Schulman emphasises the importance of developing what he refers to as the ill-defined concept of a "wisdom of the practice". The importance of a significance of developing the personal attributes of a stance, a *gaze* towards education.

Within the context of my reflections, an important question emerges. What happens when engineering academics find themselves entering a different disciplinary context as in the case of attending a professional educational programme such as the PGDip in Higher Education? Engineering academics can find the transition particularly difficult. Education research differs in many ways from that of engineering. For one, the different research paradigms are at odds with the shared understanding of a common positivist approach to research. Furthermore, engineering academics have not had the level of socialisation into the disciplinary discourse that a humanities student would be exposed to (Gardner & Willey, 2018). They perceive engagement and research in teaching and learning as a weaker, less-important field of research compared to "real" engineering work (Blaine et al., 2019; Case, 2015).

LCT dimension of semantics – detecting a gaze in written discourse

Becoming a certain kind of person, a knower in a specific practice, is linked to acquiring a particular way of thinking, of organising knowledge. Acquiring a particular gaze enables one to not only recognise the legitimate discourse associated with the discipline. It also allows one to realise it within legitimate *academic* text. Academic texts exhibit a number of characteristics making up what is referred to as text-based reality (Wertsch, 1991). These are described as "problem-spaces…created and maintained through textual or semiotic means alone" (Wertsch, 1991:74). At a first level, academic texts are *depersonalised*. One writes without a *particular* reader in mind. Language becomes more specialised as the level of abstraction increases. Secondly, texts are also *bounded.* They exist within a particular "symbolically bounded universe" (Slonimsky & Shalem, 2010:82) within which one agrees to operate. Finally, text-based realities are *systematised*. They have a particular structure and logic, organising principles, that students need to be able to recognise within such texts, and realise or reproduce them within assessment tasks.

The LCT dimension of Semantics (Maton, 2014b:18–19) provides a useful tool for making explicit the relationship between context and content, revealing the way that meaning is construed within texts through its distinction between semantic density, the "degree of condensation of meaning within practices" and semantic gravity, the "degree to which meaning relates to its context" (Maton, 2014a:36). Semantic gravity and semantic density both operate along continua. The stronger the semantic density (SD+), the more meanings are condensed within a particular practice. Weaker semantic density (SD–) refers to a lower degree of condensation of meaning. If meanings are more dependent on a particular context or abstracted in nature, then the semantic gravity will be stronger (SG+). A weaker semantic gravity (SG–) would imply that meanings are less strongly tied to context. The varying relative strengths of semantic gravity and semantic density give rise to four semantic codes within the sematic plane: rhizomatic, prosaic, rarefied and worldly (Figure 7.3). The way that context and complexity of meaning are used

within legitimate text can reveal the way that students understand and navigate the complex problem-spaces of text-based realities. In tracking changes in SD and SG (and ultimately shifts in the semantic codes) over time, one can also observe shifts in gaze towards the practice, ultimately revealing shifts in discourse.

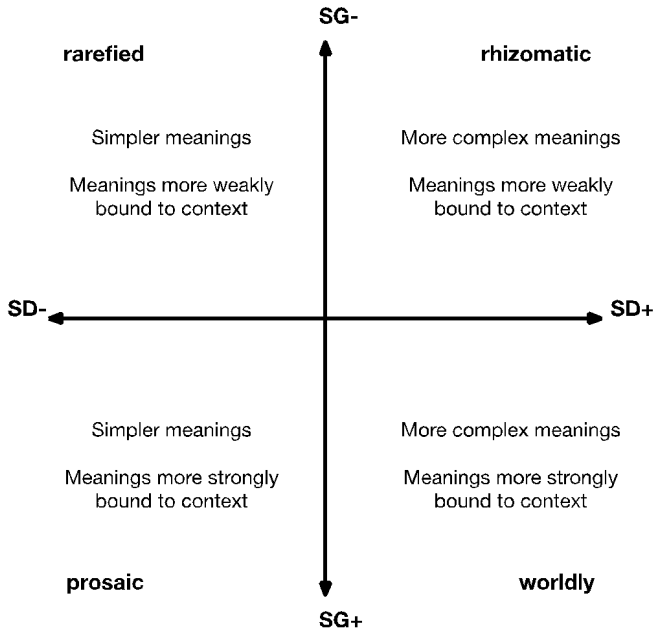

Figure 7.3: The semantic plane: relationship between meaning and context within a socio-cultural practice revealing the four semantic codes (Maton, 2016:1–23).

Within education, richness of meaning and complexity is achieved through bringing into conversation different concepts, theories, phenomena. Very often, students entering a new discipline lack the gaze necessary to recognise (and realise) the organising principles particular to the discipline. This absence of the required gaze can become evident in written discourse in a number of ways (Slonimsky & Shalem, 2010):

- Reliance on personal experience rather than drawing from theoretical principles resulting in simple descriptions of a particular context.

- Use of broad platitudes as opposed to drawing from contextually relevant and theoretically sound positions.
- Use of personal experience as evidence to support a theoretical position. This case is often shown up as an oscillation, between rhizomatic and prosaic codes on the semantic plane.
- Uncritical use or simple listing of theoretical perspectives linked to a lack of understanding of the organising principles of the discipline.

An engineer at crossroads … an autoethnographic account

The main interest explored in this chapter is shifts in gaze over time which form the object of analysis. The unit of analysis is an individual academic engaging within a formal education programme. In this case, a Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education, offered at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. The selection of myself as the case to be studied (and as the unit of analysis) was guided by the following points:

- Proximity to the events allowing for deep and meaningful reflection.
- Being able to track changes in my academic identity over time through the PGDip as a whole as well as through its individual courses.
- My disciplinary background and socialisation as an engineer which took place before my engagement with the PGDipHE has the potential to emphasise shifts in academic identity.
- Ease of data access: analysis of reflections, documents and written assessment tasks.

In this autoethnographic case study, a total of nine reading responses (three from each core course) was selected for analysis through a process of purposive sampling. Of the nine responses analysed, three were selected for discussion within this chapter.

In autoethnography, the focus is on reflexively exploring and sharing one's own story rather than being a silent and neutral observer interpreting behaviours of a community (Laher

et al., 2019:266-267). The emphasis is on highlighting one's own voice through meaningful reflection. One of the key aspects of autoethnography is an emphasis on accounts of "epiphanies" as "remembered moments perceived to have significantly impacted the trajectory of a person's life". These incidents are significant and worthy of analysis as they uncover ways in which people negotiate difficult or troubling situations (Ellis et al., 2011:275). One is reminded of the concept of "critical incidents" (Bassot, 2016:193), bring us face-to-face with our often firmly held assumptions and allowing for a process of reflection to take place.

The Wits PGDip

The Postgraduate Diploma, first offered in 2016 by the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, is a two-year, part-time programme. It is made up of three core modules: Learning and Teaching, Assessment, and Curriculum Design and Development. A fourth, research-based module, New Directions completes the programme. The main aim of the programme is to "take a scholarly and professional approach to teaching and learning in higher education" (WSoE, 2017b:1). The courses are designed in such a way as to provide a degree of reinforced knowledge-building.

Learning and Teaching in Higher Education emphasises the importance of *reflection* in- and on-practice. Tasks and assessments are aimed at cultivating and fostering scholarly reflection and critique of one's teaching practice informed by core theories of and approaches to learning.

Assessment in Higher Education extends the engagement to theories of assessment with a core emphasis on not only reflection but also *application* of these theories within the context of teaching. The course is built around a "puzzle", a particular "assessment issue or challenge that an individual lecturer has faced/is facing" (WSoE, 2017a). Students are encouraged to treat this puzzle as a mini research project in which theories of learning and assessment are applied.

In Curriculum Design and Development in Higher Education there is a move towards a deeper and more *analytical engagement with key curriculum theories* and debates. The curriculum module

builds on previous work and further emphasises "theoretical understanding of the different approaches to the study of curriculum and curriculum development in higher education" enabling academics to "interpret, design, implement and evaluate curricula. Lecturers/academics should also be able to critically interrogate how curriculum policies are shaped by societal, institutional, personal and interpersonal contexts and processes and in turn shape these contexts" (WSoE, 2018a:1)

The New Directions research course is designed to enable students to draw from the three preceding courses and take their first steps as researchers within the field of higher education. In particular, the course is aimed to guide participants to "identify and research an emerging issue of significance in the broad community or in [their] teaching, assessment or curriculum practice" (WSoE 2018b:1). By the end of this course, participants are expected to prepare a draft paper.

An important characteristic of all courses is the practice of writing "reading responses". Reading responses are short essays, not more than about a page long. They are written in *response* to a chosen prescribed journal article or book chapter. The aim is to help students to engage constructively with the ideas presented in the readings and provide a platform "for students to make their thinking in process ... visible to themselves ... [and] ... a way of *recording* students' responses, interests, difficulties, - a way of 'forming meaning and attaining understanding'..." (WSoE, 2017b). Responses, together with other assessment tasks, final summative assessments (in the form of take-home essays), are all designed to signal and foster the importance of interaction between texts and peers. Through engagement with pedagogical practices, assessment tasks, prescribed readings and interactions with peers, participating academics are exposed to and gradually develop the discourses characteristic of education.

Findings and discussion

A key aspect of data analysis using Legitimation Code Theory is the development of a relevant translation device. Translation devices provide an "external language of description between theory and data" (Maton & Chen, 2016:28). Within this study, the

unit of analysis is shifts in knower gaze which is linked to the way that meaning is created within legitimate texts. The translation device for semantic gravity was designed by considering three main shifts in context: highly contextual accounts of everyday experience (SG++), a move towards context-independent engagement, evidenced by a shift in context (SG+), and the engagement with presentation or discussion of general rules, principles or theories (SG–). This translation device can be seen in Table 7.2.

Designing a translation device for semantic density presented a few difficulties as I had to carefully define what constitutes complexity and condensation of meaning. As the discussion revolves around the development of a gaze towards education, complexity can be defined as a progressive linking of concepts, readings and contexts. These variations in semantic density are particularly important within the context of the study. The relevant translation device for semantic density (SD) used can be seen in Table 7.3.

Table 7.2: Translation device for sematic gravity (SG)

	Code	Indicator	Example from text
Semantic Gravity	SG–	Entry refers to a general principle or theory	"...alignment of objectives, teaching and learning activities and assessment is extremely important for the creation of a conducive environment for deep learning to occur. It gives the students the necessary clarity of direction and freedom to focus on the aspects of learning without having to constantly watch their backs."
	SG+	Entry shows a shift to another context	"The main theme in the article is the importance of alignment of all these three components: objectives, teaching and assessment."
	SG++	Entry refers to author's own personal context and experience	"When I started teaching, I was asked to deliver an introductory course in electrical engineering to second year engineers of other disciplines. It was a service course that had a very bad reputation. Very large classes which translated to lots of marking and disinterested students which translated to challenging teaching"

Table 7.3: Translation device for sematic density (SD)

	Code	Indicator	Example from text
Semantic Density	SD++	Entry characterised by the use of several different concepts, readings, contexts arriving at new interpretations and richer meanings	"In the postgraduate environment, however, I do feel that this perspective has merit. Postgraduate studies are very often characterised by power struggles between supervisors and students (Bartlett & Mercer, 2000). It is often a battle between the person who holds the key to knowledge and the person seeking knowledge. The pressure to publish, as well as unethical co-authoring practices (Clowes & Shefer, 2013) most definitely lead to students feeling cut off from the learning experience."
	SD+	Entry characterised by the linking of several different concepts, contexts, readings	"The successful alignment of objectives, teaching and assessment can result, under the correct conditions, in the creation of a very conducive environment for the student to engage in deep learning."
	SD–	Entry focuses on the simple interpretation of a situation, context, concept or reading	"Thinking back to my undergraduate years I realise that in many courses, the objectives, the teaching activities and often the assessment was not aligned".
	SD--	Entry focuses on description of a particular context (classroom situation, reading or concept)	"It reminds me of the difficulties, successes and failures that I had first as a student and later on as a young academic. There were times when, as a student, I felt that by stockpiling notes and increasing my sources of information I would be able to gain a deeper understanding of the topic at hand."

Into the unknown… evidence of a blank gaze

The first response I analysed was also the very first one that I wrote. It was written as part of the first course of the PGDip, Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. I chose to start my analysis with this response as It signified my first introduction to academic writing within the field of education. The task was a response to Biggs' 1999 article *What the student does: Teaching for enhanced learning.* The process of writing this response but most importantly the comments that I received from the facilitators acted as a critical incident. The incident occurred upon receiving my results and feedback for this reading response. I was convinced that I had done well. It was not the lower-than-expected mark that unsettled me. It was the comments that I received from the course facilitator:

> Your strength is in applying theory in a specific way, to your teaching and learning situation. You report good results in your teaching, and implicitly, in student's learning. I want to challenge you to look beyond your specific, existing context, to a wider, more complex, less context-bound world - that of theory. Can you think of limitations or weaknesses in the theory in relation to different learning and teaching situations?

On reading this item of feedback, my initial reaction was a combination of disbelief and something bordering on indignation: "well *of course* I am good at applying theory to a specific context! After all, *I am an engineer*!" My assumption was that I could apply the same principles and procedures to education as I would to engineering. I appeared to be blind to, or unaware of, the specific organising principles of education. Coding for semantic gravity and semantic density yielded the following plot on the semantic plane (Figure 7.4). The numbers in each circle indicate the progression between codes throughout the paper, in the order in which they appear. The arrows indicate the general movement on the semantic plane.

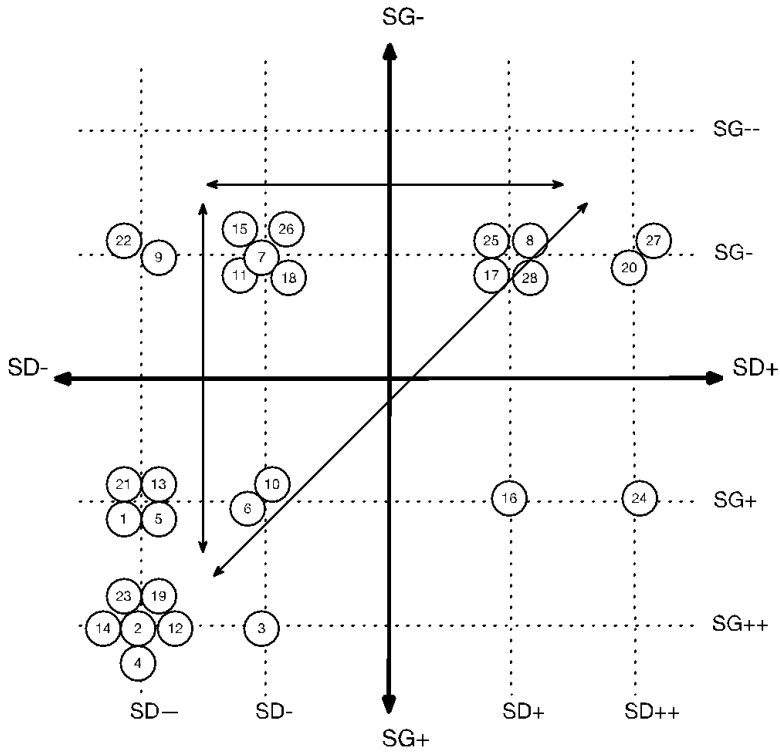

Figure 7.4: First reading response (Biggs, 1999) - dominated by prosaic, rarefied and rhizomatic codes

As seen from Figure 7.4, the response is characterised by a dominance shifts between the prosaic, rarefied and rhizomatic codes. Discussions typically star firmly in the prosaic drawn from personal experience and written in simple everyday language. This example is then compared to an existing or related theory (a movement to the rhizomatic code) finally leading to a generalisation or platitude (rarefied code).

Although my voice is present within the discussion, what is missing is an active interrogation and critical response to the position presented in the reading. The semantic analysis of this response brings to the fore an important point. The dominance of a prosaic - rhizomatic - rarefied code oscillation shows a lack of understanding of the organising principles, of how to navigate

text-based realities within the field of education (Slonimsky & Shalem, 2010). In this context, these patterns are evidence of a lack of recognition of the particular way that knowledge is structured in education: by bringing into conversation many and often opposing arguments. Coming from an engineering background I entered the PGDipHE with a *blank gaze* towards education.

The analysis of the second and third reading responses written, showed a shift away from discussion characterised by the offering of personal experiences and anecdotes to be compared to theory and vice-versa. From the analysis of the response to Chapter 4, *The framing of learning: Approaches to learning*, from Moon's *A handbook of reflective and experiential learning* (2004). It is interesting to continue to examine the feedback received:

> This is a well-researched essay rather than a reading response, but it certainly shows sound understanding of key points in several texts which you have drawn in. Your examples are also pertinent. Well done; but do try to shorten your response and highlight areas of agreement and disagreement with the authors.

The feedback appears to confirm elements of the semantic analysis: the response was described as "well-researched" and showing a "sound understanding of key points *in several texts* which [I] have drawn in", as well as the use of pertinent examples. Importantly, the feedback also brings to the fore something quite significant: a lack of awareness of the horizontal nature of the discipline of education. Even though several texts were brought into conversation within the response, it is the knowledge from others contained within these texts that is being legitimated, downplaying my role as a legitimate knower within the field. My voice is not that evident within the response. My gaze, however, towards education as a knowledge practice is evolving.

A first breakthrough: Finding my voice

The next turning point occurred within the second module (Assessment in Higher Education) and in my response to a paper by Leong, "On varying the difficulty of test items" (2006). In the

paper, the author discusses what determines the difficulty of a test question and offers an "item difficulty framework" (2006:1). The semantic analysis of my response yielded the following plot on the semantic plane (Figure 7.5).

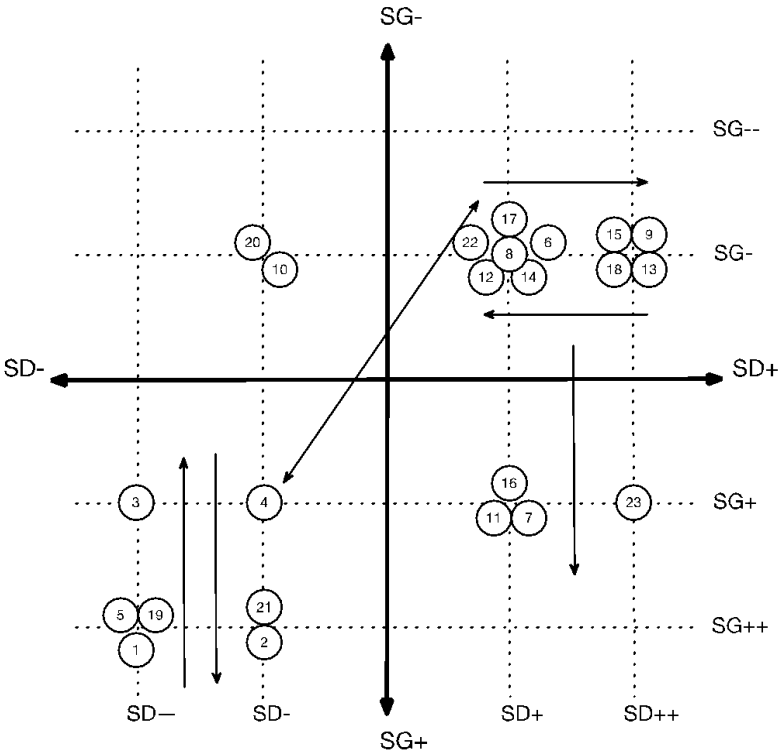

Figure 7.5: Reading Response five (Leong, 2006) - Emergence of voice

A careful examination of Figure 7.5 and comparing it to Figure 7.4 (first response) yields two interesting, related and significant points:

- There are fewer movements *into* the prosaic code. There are quite a few movements within the prosaic code, but these happen early on in the response.
- Having established context early on in the response, there is a shift to the rhizomatic code with modulations of semantic density.

- There are proportionally more movements between the rhizomatic and worldly codes, signifying an attempt at applying theory to context. The response ends with a move to the worldly code.

What is not immediately evident from the sematic analysis is that this was the very first time that I expressed my strong disagreement with the author [emphasis added]:

> When thinking of assessment, I have become acutely aware of the importance of alignment in a particular course. In order for assessment tasks to be meaningful, these tasks and by extension their component questions need to reflect the teaching objectives as well as the way in which these objectives have been taught (Biggs, 1999). At the same time, I have realised the importance of assessment as an extension of teaching and learning and as a means of promoting student-self regulation (Carless, 2015; Nicol & MacFarlane-Dick, 2006) through meaningful formative and summative assessment. Taking these concepts into account while reading Leong's article, I realised that rather than focusing on whether a question is easy or difficult, one should actually be talking of whether a particular question is appropriate or not

This passage shows an effective use of multiple sources to build a foundation from which to challenge Leong's position. Within the quoted passage, one can see evidence of recognition of myself as a legitimate knower. This shift also highlights the importance within disciplines such as education of interacting with significant others who share a particular gaze. It is through these meaningful interactions that the acquirer is allowed "metaphorically to look at (recognise) and regard and evaluate (realise) the phenomenal of legitimate concern" (Bernstein, 2000:173).

A final shift: moving beyond the confines of the papers

From the analysis of the reading responses thus far, I have been able to track a gradual change in my written discourse: a shift

away from dwelling in the prosaic (every-day highly contextual examples) and rarefied codes (general statements, platitudes) and towards building complexity of meaning through bringing many different sources in conversation with each other, bringing to the fore points of agreement and disagreement.

In the last three responses analysed, a further shift was noted: a tendency of engaging at a more theoretical level. What is evident in these last three responses analysed was an apparent freedom to explore and "play" with ideas, something that was not observable in the initial responses. As the analysis presented in this chapter started with the very first response that I wrote, it is fitting to conclude with the last response that I wrote. Seen in Figure 7.6 is the semantic plot of my response to Luckett's article *Conceptualising an epistemically diverse curriculum for academic developers* (2001).

The main characteristic of this response is my willingness to engage with other papers. I was able to draw links between them and attempt to look *beyond* these papers linking them to new theoretical concepts. I proposed the idea of curriculum as a journey. This idea is discussed, explored further and linked not only to the idea of moving through an *epistemically diverse* curriculum but also imagining how this diversity could be enacted through a waving between the rhizomatic, prosaic, rarefied and worldly codes on the semantic plane. By comparing the plot in Figure 7.6 to the previous three plots presented, a clearer shift towards legitimating complex and interconnected meanings (rhizomatic code) as applied to more contextual situations (worldly code) is evident.

As an aside, at the time of the writing of this last reading response that I was introduced to the LCT dimension of Semantics. First through a prescribed paper and secondly and fortuitously through attending a talk by Karl Maton, the creator of LCT, held at the Wits School of Education. I was taken by the explanatory power of LCT as a language of description coupled with a clear and succinct graphical representation. LCT as a framework addressed my sensibilities as an engineer.

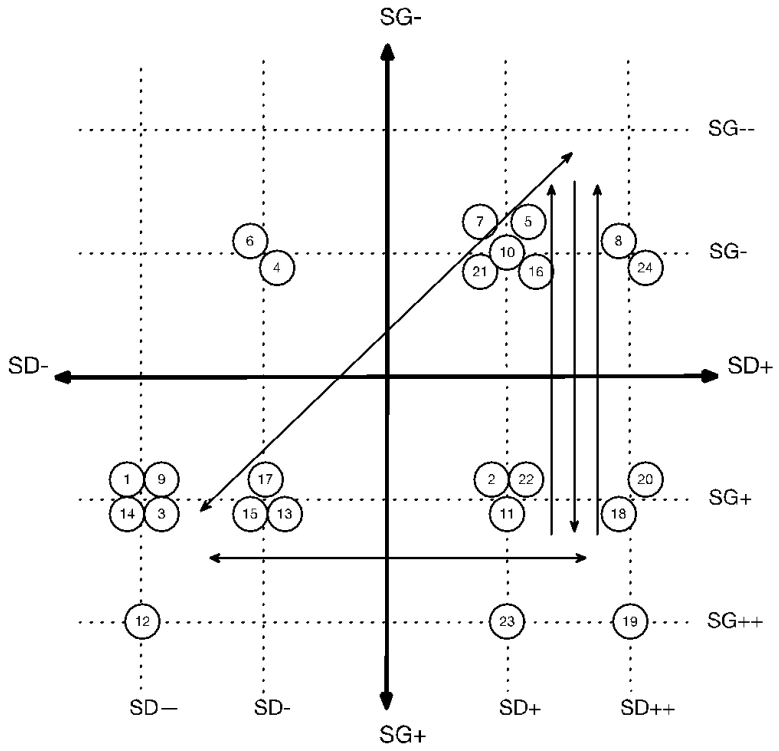

Figure 7.6: Reading Response nine (Luckett, 2001) - Move towards theorising and exploring

Where does this analysis lead to thus far? The discussion started with a description of a critical incident initiated by the unexpected feedback comments on the first response that was written. Through the use of LCT's semantic codes, I have shown that in the course of the PGDip, a change in written discourse, signalling a shift in gaze, took place. The analysis of my reading responses showed how over time there is a noticeable shift away from the everyday and towards the theoretical and applied in my written discourse. This gravitation to predominately rhizomatic and worldly codes is typical of education. As Shulman (1987) points out, one engages in the application of theoretical (disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge) in complex (social) contexts.

In essence, I entered the PGDip programme with a blank gaze towards education. Like McIntyre, I did not see teaching as

a practice in its own right having its own history and organising principles. I had been teaching for a good number of years with no formal training. The affordance of the PGDip is that on the one hand, engaging with the knowledge base of education offers a language of description with which to discuss aspects of teaching and learning, assessment and curriculum. On the other hand, the interactions with significant others embodied by theorists, facilitators and peers makes explicit the way that knowledge is construed within education. The practice of writing reading responses, coupled with meaningful feedback, further allows one to put in practice the ways knowledge is structured and meanings are created. I therefore started seeing education and teaching in a different light. The simple "conduit that transmits practice" was now replaced by a much more complex system. I was able to see, to recognise the organising principles particular to teaching (and learning). The simple representation in Figure 7.1 now becomes something a bit more complex.

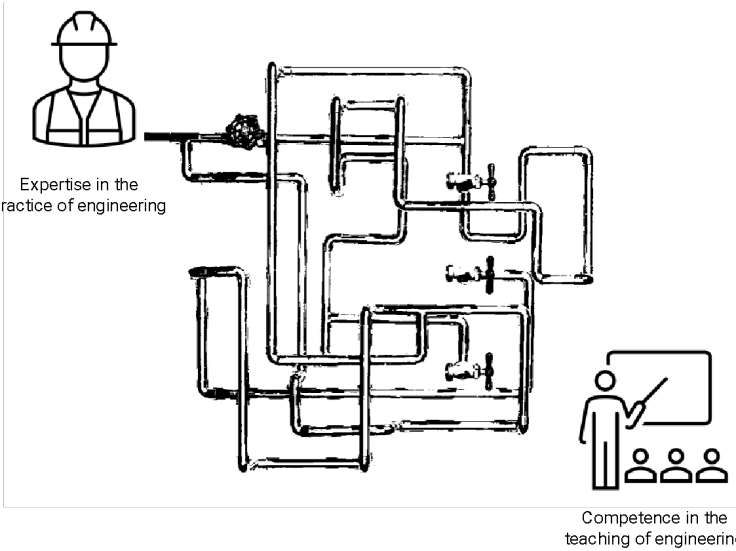

Figure 7.7: Teaching is not so much a simple "conduit that transmits practice" anymore...

The realisation of education as a practice in its own right with its own complex organising principles proved instrumental in the

development of my identity as a teacher of the discipline. This realisation also filtered down to my teaching. Being able to talk about teaching in a far more nuanced way enabled me to "see" failings in my teaching and assessment practice. In the years since completing the PGDipHE I have drawn on theoretical positions and used frameworks such as LCT (which was introduced to me in during the PGDipHE) to inform my practice.

Conclusion

The analysis presented in this chapter demonstrates that participation in a programme like a PGDip can be transformative. Deep engagement within the programme is able to shift one's perspective on education and teaching. The analysis of this transformative journey has also demonstrated the power of LCT through the use of the dimension of semantics as a proxy for detecting shifts in knower gaze. As the dimension of semantics focuses on the interplay of context-dependence and complexity of meaning, one can use semantic plots to probe to what extent students are able to recognise organising principles of a knowledge practice and realise them within the context of text-based realities.

As I progressed through the programme, I became increasingly aware of the organising principles characteristic of education. This shift from a blank to a cultivated gaze towards education was facilitated by two key factors: (a) engagement with the propositional knowledge specific to education, and (b) through meaningful interactions with significant others, including authors of texts and participants in the course (students and facilitators).

Within the context of the PGDip, the ongoing practice of writing responses proved catalytic in the development of knower gaze, which in turn influences the way in which one orients oneself towards a knowledge practice ultimately being recognised by others as a certain kind of person. The significance of writing these responses rests on

- Engaging with the content of the paper with a particular text-based reality in a way that illustrates the particular structure, the organising principles of educational knowledge.

- Facilitating a *conversation with* the author of the article and ultimately forcing the author of the reading response to take a firm position towards the paper(s) in question and argue a point.

The work presented in this chapter is located firmly within the realm of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning which is an attempt to cultivate an "informed, reflecting and enquiring teacher whose focus is on the improvement of their teaching so as to improve their student's learning" (Tight, 2019:29). One of the main affordances of the PGDip is the placing of the academic in the shoes of the learner entering a new field. In turn, this facilitates a process of reflection to take place leading to a greater awareness of one's role as a teacher. Acquiring a suitable language of description as well as access to the organising principles of education, the participator is in a prime position to influence pedagogy within the classroom: the way in which lectures are given, assessment tasks are designed and how one thinks about curriculum. The awareness of the complexity of education as a practice is a first step to becoming a more responsive teacher.

In this chapter, I have presented and analysed my journey through the PGDip in Higher Education at Wits University. A reader may be left with the impression that I underwent a clear, linear and relatively straightforward transformation and that the journey somehow "ended". At the same time, the reader may also think that participation within a PGDipHE programme is a "silver bullet", guaranteed to solve all problems and lead to high degrees of transformation. The reality is that the journey was neither smooth and linear nor did it end. In my case, participation initiated a shift in gaze. A degree of agency on my part, a desire and interest to engage within the structures of the PGDipHE enabled my transformation. This may not be the case for someone else.

References

Bartlett, A. & Mercer, G. 2000. Reconceptualising discourses of power in postgraduate pedagogies. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 5(2):195-204. https://doi.org/10.1080/135625100114849

Bassot, B. 2016. *The reflective practice guide: An interdisciplinary approach to critical reflection*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315768298

Benvenuti, S., MacGregor, A., De Klerk, D., Padayachee, K. & Dison, L. 2022. Learning to belong: Navigating liminal spaces between disciplinary and teaching identities. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 36(6). https://doi.org/10.20853/36-6-5517

Bernstein, B. 2000. *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity: Theory, research, critique*. (2nd ed.) Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. https://doi.org/10.5040/9798216401735

Biggs, J.B. 1999. What the student does: Teaching for enhanced learning. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 18(1):57-75. https://doi.org/10.1080/0729436990180105

Blaine, D.C., Jacobs, C. & Basson, A. 2019. *How do engineering lecturers perceive the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning?* Proceedings of the Eighth Research in Engineering Education Symposium. Cape Town: REES. 790-798.

Bonasso, S.G. 2001. Engineering, leadership, and integral philosophy. *Journal of Professional Issues in Engineering Education and Practice*, 127(1):17-25. https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)1052-3928(2001)127:1(17)

Case, J.M. 2015. Knowledge for teaching, knowledge about teaching: Exploring the links between education research, scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) and scholarly teaching. *Journal of Education*, 61(2015):53-72. https://doi.org/10.17159/i61a03

Clowes, L. & Shefer, T. 2013. "It's not a simple thing, co-publishing": Challenges of co-authorship between supervisors and students in South African higher educational contexts. *Africa Education Review*, 10(1):32-47. https://doi.org/10.1080/18146627.2013.786865

Dison, L. 2016. Scrutinising the role of reflection in a postgraduate diploma in higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 30(6). https://doi.org/10.20853/30-6-718

Dym, C.L., Agogino, A.M., Eris, O., Frey, D.D. & Leifer, L.J. 2005. Engineering design thinking, teaching, and learning. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 94(1):103-120. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2168-9830.2005.tb00832.x

Ellis, C., Adams, T.E. & Bochner, A.P. 2011. Autoethnography: An overview. *Historical Social Research*, 36(4):273-290.

Gardner, A., & Willey, K. 2018. Academic identity reconstruction: The transition of engineering academics to engineering education researchers. *Studies in Higher Education*, 43(2):234-250. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1162779

Hanrahan, H. 2014. The evolution of engineering knowledge. In: Young, M. & Muller, J. (eds.) *Knowledge, expertise and the professions*. London: Routledge, pp: 109-127.

Kahn, P. 2017. Teaching in higher education as a collective endeavour. In: Leibowitz, B., Bozalek, V. & Kahn, P. (eds.) *Theorising learning to teach in higher education*. London: Routledge, pp: 157-171.

Laher, S., Fynn, A. & Kramer, S. (eds.) 2019. *Transforming research methods in the social sciences: Case studies from South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. https://doi.org/10.18772/22019032750

Leibowitz, B., Vorster, J. & Ndebele, C. 2016. Why a contextual approach to professional development? *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 30(6). https://doi.org/10.20853/30-6-714

Leong, S.C. 2006. *On varying the difficulty of test items*. Proceedings of the 32nd Annual Conference of the International Association for Educational Assessment. Singapore: IAEA. 1-6.

Light, G. & Cox, R. 2000. The challenge of professionalism. In: Light, G., Cox, R. & Calkins, S. (eds.) *Learning and teaching in higher education: The reflective professional*. London: Sage, pp: 1-14.

Luckett, K. 2001. A proposal for an epistemically diverse curriculum for South African higher education in the 21st century. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 15(2):49-61. https://doi.org/10.4314/sajhe.v15i2.25354

Machingambi, S. 2020. Academics' experiences of a post graduate diploma in higher education programme: A case of a university in South Africa. *International Journal of African Higher Education*, 7(1):9-22. https://doi.org/10.6017/ijahe.v7i1.11553

MacIntyre, A. & Dunne, J. 2002. Alasdair MacIntyre on education: In dialogue with Joseph Dunne. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 36(1):1-19. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.00256

Maton, K. 2010. Analysing knowledge claims and practices: Languages of legitimation. In: Maton, K. & Moore, R. (eds.) *Social realism, knowledge and the society of education: Coalitions of the mind*. London: Continuum, pp: 35-59.

Maton, K. 2014a. A TALL order? Legitimation Code Theory for academic language and learning. *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, 8(3):34-48.

Maton, K. 2014b. *Knowledge and knowers: Towards a realist sociology of education*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203885734

Maton, K. 2016. Legitimation Code Theory: Building knowledge about knowledge building. In: Maton, K., Hood, S. & Shay, S. (eds.) *Knowledge building: Educational studies in legitimation code theory*. London: Routledge, pp: 1-23. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315672342

Maton, K. & Chen, R. 2016. Creating a translation device for studying constructivist pedagogy. In: Maton, K., Hood, S. & Shay, S. (eds.) *Knowledge building: Educational studies in legitimation code theory*. London: Routledge, pp: 27-48. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315672342

McNiff, J. 2008. The significance of 'I' in educational research and the responsibility of intellectuals. *South African Journal of Education*, 28(3):351-364. https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v28n3a178

Moon, J.A. 2004. *A handbook of reflective and experiential learning: Theory and practice*. London: Routledge.

Quinn, L. & Vorster, J. 2004. Transforming teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning in a post graduate certificate in higher education and training course. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 18(1). https://doi.org/10.4314/sajhe.v18i1.25449

Quinn, L. & Vorster, J. 2014. Isn't it time to start thinking about 'developing' academic developers in a more systematic way? *International Journal for Academic Development*, 19(3):255-258. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2013.879719

Schultz, R.B. & DeMers, M.N. 2020. Transitioning from emergency remote learning to deep online learning experiences in geography education. *Journal of Geography*, 119(5):142-146. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221341.2020.1813791

Shulman, L. 1987. Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1):1-23. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.57.1.j463w79r56455411

Shulman, L.S. 2005. Signature pedagogies in the professions. *Daedalus*, 134(3):52-59. https://doi.org/10.1162/0011526054622015

Skead, M. 2018. What's next? Experiences of a formal course for academic developers. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 37(2):390-403. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2017.1359500

Slonimsky, L. & Shalem, Y. 2010. Reading below the surface: Student's organisation of content and form. *Higher Education Monitor*, 10(2010):29-48.

Tight, M. 2019. *Higher education research: The developing field*. London: Bloomsbury Academic. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474283779

Vesilind, P.A. 2001. Engineering as applied social science. *Journal of Professional Issues in Engineering Education and Practice*, 127(4):184-188. https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)1052-3928(2001)127:4(184)

Wertsch, J. 1991. Sociocultural setting and the zone of proximal development: The problem of text-based realities. In: Tolchinsky-Landsmann, L. (ed). *Culture, schooling and psychological development*. Norwood: Ablex, pp: 71-85.

West, N.J. 2021. *Changing identities and gazes through participation in a PGDip(HE) programme: A case study of transformation*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

WSoE (Wits School of Education). 2017a. *EDUC 5153: Assessment For Learning in Higher Education*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

WSoE (Wits School of Education). 2017b. *EDUC 5154: Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Reading Responses*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

WSoE (Wits School of Education). 2018a. *EDUC 5150: Curriculum Design and Development in Higher Education*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

WSoE (Wits School of Education). 2018b. *EDUC 5155: New Directions in Higher Education*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.