CREATING A LIVING CURRICULUM

AN INSIDER APPROACH TO CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I first explain my concerns regarding current practices of curriculum development, based on my own experience, before offering a discussion on how curriculum development might look if a values-based practitioner self-inquiry approach were to be adopted. Through an explication of this genre of action research, I show how the iterative learning of the curriculum makers, through a process of scholarly self-inquiry, is used to hold themselves accountable for the improvement of both curriculum content and pedagogical practice. I introduce the idea of how the creation of personalised living theories, based on collectively agreed upon values, helps to minimise the gap between theory and practice. The notion of values as living standards of judgment is elucidated, demonstrating how academics can utilise them to ensure that explicit epistemological and ontological principles are embodied in curriculum design, implementation and evaluation. Examples from a teacher education context shows how this approach to curriculum development and inquiry can be an effective way of transforming the teacher education curriculum to make it more relevant to the social, economic and political contexts in which teachers have to live and work.

MY CONCERN WITH CURRENT APPROACHES TO CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

To illustrate my concern with how I have experienced curriculum development at my institution, I present a short extract from a recent meeting of lecturers from a programme that was undergoing re-curriculation:

DOS:⁸³ So, what modules do we want in this programme?

Lecturer A: I think we definitely need something on how to do assessment in ways that are more appropriate to learner-centred teaching ...

Lecturer B: Don't we have that already in the programme?

⁸³ DOS – Director of School.

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Lecturer A: I don't think so ...

Lecturer C: You know, what would really help me is to know what others are doing, what is in the modules you teach ...

During the course of the re-curriculation meetings, this and similar conversations led me to realise that, prior to this attempt, curriculum had tended to be developed without sufficient collaboration between the people who actually implement it. My experience of earlier re-curriculation initiatives left me with the impression that there was a lack of cohesion across modules, the choice of modules often occurring as a result of who had the most influence or what expertise was available. Although basic programme outcomes were agreed on in a consultative manner, the actual design of individual modules and determination of module-specific outcomes tended to be left to 'module coordinators', who worked in isolation to produce a module the content of which only they were familiar with. This would then be sent to an external moderator who would not have an overview of the whole programme, and could only comment on the academic merit of this specific module in terms of outcomes, content, material and assessment.

My specific interest lies in the integration of HIV and AIDS education into the curriculum. I am aware that curriculum development needs to be a co-operative, holistic, participative and systematic process, otherwise the final product runs the risk of being fragmented, disjointed and contradictory, containing potential omissions and duplications. Curriculum is viewed as both process and product (Dewey 1938; Smith 2000), and so the approach to curriculum development will determine how relevant, appropriate and effective the final product is. If it is accepted that the purpose of a teacher education curriculum is to develop teachers who can adapt their teaching to specific contexts to ensure that it is inclusive, learner-centred and culturally relevant, then we need to ensure that these values are embodied in our own practices. Curriculum is a "complex relational dynamic that is shaped by multiple social and cultural contexts" (Nason & Whitty 2007:271) and therefore a critical awareness of such contexts must underpin the development process. The discussion now turns to specific aspects of curriculum development and inquiry that foreground my concerns.

THEORETICAL PARADIGM

The starting point for curriculum development is theory (Schiro 2008) – the philosophical paradigm influences the choice of outcomes, the content, the preferred pedagogy, what is emphasised, and what is omitted. Since most higher education institutions in South Africa are in a process of transformation, it is important for curricula to be grounded in critical, emancipatory paradigms that promote social change and uphold the values on which the South African constitution is based. The theories that shaped curriculum development in the past may no longer be relevant in today's world, where teachers are called upon to do more than teach subject content (Visser 2005). Our society is characterised by social injustices – lack of basic amenities, extreme poverty,

gender inequalities – and the resultant prevalence of HIV and AIDS in communities, that make it very difficult for teachers to implement the knowledge they gained during their studies, since most of the teaching strategies and theories they learnt were imported from contexts where such barriers to teaching and learning are minimal. Knowledge does not equal change in societies where many people are prevented from implementing change due to restrictive and punitive social structures and norms (Baxen & Bredlid 2009).

The paradigm underpinning any curriculum for teacher development in today's society should guide the choice of pedagogy and curriculum content to equip them to critique the social injustices prevalent in the status quo and to develop the skills and confidence to overcome environmental challenges that pose threats to teaching and learning. It therefore has to be based on a critical and emancipatory ontology, instilling in teachers a desire to contribute to social and educational improvement (Somekh & Zeichner 2010). However, in my experience, the theoretical base for curriculum development is not always clear to those implementing the curriculum, although it may have been to the original designers. This is particularly problematic when tutors or part-time lecturers are used to teach without having been part of the curriculum conversation, or when lecturers are switched due to workload commitments. Unless lecturers are mindful of the theoretical paradigm underpinning what they are teaching and how they should be teaching it, they cannot effectively evaluate their own teaching to determine if it is still in line with the original intentions of the curriculum.

RELEVANCE OF CURRICULUM TO THE CURRENT SOCIAL REALITY

I have been involved in determining the extent to which our Faculty of Education addresses HIV and AIDS in the curriculum for pre- and in-service teachers. This allowed me the opportunity to develop an overview of the kind of things we were preparing teachers to do – I say *do*, because the emphasis seems to be on exactly that, with little attention paid to what teachers should be learning to *be*. This tends to result in a technicist, pragmatic approach to teaching, which may not be relevant to the diverse and socially challenged contexts in which the majority of our teachers live and work. I suspect that our current curricula create knowledge reproducers rather than professionals who can critically assess their own contexts and adapt the curricula to reach the outcomes in a more meaningful, inclusive and culturally relevant manner. We are developing teachers to work in contexts that are ideal and do not exist for the majority – perhaps this is one reason why so many of our teachers become disillusioned and lose interest in teaching (Olivier & Wood 2007; Pretorius & De Villiers 2009).

Pedagogy

A learner-centred pedagogy, where students are engaged, participative and can actively construct meaning, is accepted as the ideal basis for teaching and learning within the context of a transformed curriculum (Baxen, Wood & Austin 2010). However, it is very easy for teachers and teacher educators to fall back into the model of teacher-

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driven learning when they are faced with large classes, time constraints and many other barriers to effective learning that exist in our educational institutions (Walton, Nel, Hugo & Muller 2009). Drawing from my experience with HIV education, a critical pedagogical approach assumes that teachers have engaged both in critical self-reflection, and how they could engage learners to do the same. The ultimate aim of such reflection is to move them to take personal responsibility for changing their own behaviour and thus contributing to a change in social norms. As James-Traore, Finger, Rulland and Savariaud (2004:2) argue:

... effective training first has to have an impact on the teachers themselves, helping them examine their own attitudes towards sexuality and behaviours regarding HIV prevention, understand the content that they are teaching, learn participatory teaching skills, and gain confidence to discuss sensitive and controversial topics.

However, research indicates that teaching still tends to focus on the transmission of facts and information *about* the virus, rather than on engaging students to think about how the effects of the pandemic may play out in specific social, gender, economic and political contexts and how this might affect the lives of their learners (Baxen *et al* 2010; McLaren 2003).

Based on the above concerns, I would argue that curriculum development needs to be a true team effort, where everyone involved in the implementation is also involved in the design and evaluation so that coherence across the programme is promoted. A community of practitioners should follow a systematic process of inquiry to ensure that curriculum development is a rigorous, scholarly and well-researched process. I agree with Stenhouse (1985) that a curriculum should be viewed as a set of tentative statements that can be tried out, reflected on and changed, so that curriculum development becomes a means of continual learning. I am proposing that a values-based, self-reflective action research approach (McNiff & Whitehead 2006) is an effective way to address the concerns outlined above and the key question that I aim to address in this chapter is:

How can curriculum development and inquiry be conducted so that it remains dynamic, flexible, relevant and appropriate to the South African context?

ACTION RESEARCH: AN INSIDER PERSPECTIVE

Action research comes in many forms and is called various things by different researchers (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). However, irrespective of the name or specific genre of action research, it is generally agreed that it is based on specific values and principles (Carter 2002; Stringer 2007; Zuber-Skerrit 1996). Action research is a methodology, but it is also a paradigm (Kember 2002; Zuber-Skerrit 1996) that gives rise to dynamic, personalised and life-changing theories that operationalise the values of inclusion, people-centredness, democracy, social justice, compassion and respect. Action research is critical, evaluative, participatory and collaborative; it holds practitioners to be accountable and self-evaluative and it focuses on lifelong learning

(McNiff & Whitehead 2006). It is not stuck in one particular ideology, but as befits a critical, emancipatory paradigm, it is flexible and open to change. Rinaldo (2005) notes that, although action research has made its way into many faculties of education worldwide, it usually has been in the guise of staff development to improve teaching, rather than being seen as bona fide research or having relevance for other practices, such as curriculum development.

Self-study action research has universal human wellbeing as its value base and communicative action (Habermas 1976) as a method of realising it (McNiff 2005:1). It provides an ideal platform to realise transformative values while simultaneously generating contextually relevant theory – educators, and education, can thus be transformed through the generation of their own living theories (Whitehead 1989). Living educational theory, a notion first used by Whitehead (1989), is being adopted by academics and practitioners in South Africa as a feasible way of engaging in teaching and research that is truly transformational (Wood, Morar & Mostert 2007). I would argue that living theory is also an ideal notion to guide curriculum development, which in any case is informed by research and operationalised in teaching.

In this genre of action research, the role of practitioner as curriculum-maker is emphasised since any improvement in curriculum requires a commitment to self-improvement on the part of curriculum makers as they live out the values that underpin curriculum transformation (McNiff & Whitehead 2006). The hard borders that often exist between design and delivery of curriculum are blurred, as the academic is operating simultaneously as a researcher, curriculum designer, practitioner and evaluator while following an iterative and systematic process that leads to continual improvement in curriculum content and process.

The main purpose of this genre of action research is to enhance practitioner learning, leading to a better understanding of social and educational situations, so that action to improve the situation will be more likely to be effective and relevant. To do this, action research collects data from a “whole range of information, based on the experience of those involved” (Reason & Torbert 2001:9), encompassing inquiry into values and purposes, perceptions and ontology, as well as practical inquiry into teaching and learning practices. Through critical interrogation of purpose, values and behaviour, academics can create their own living theories (Whitehead 1989) to improve the quality of their educational practices. The curriculum inquiry process does not remain an impersonal reflection – it becomes an emotional and intellectual process carried out in the midst of everyday practice. Values have a strong emotive component and this emotion contributes to the passion that propels effective action research. The commitment to self-transformation becomes the driving force behind everyday practice, and in this way transformation is attained from within (Wood 2010). How we understand ourselves in relation to one another and to our environment (our ontology) determines how we interact with others. The ontological value underlying action research is that, although we see ourselves as individuals, we recognise that

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we live with others in a shared environment. However, rather than trying to change or improve others, action research focuses on self-transformation in an attempt to work together for sustained development, on both a personal and collective level (McNiff & Whitehead 2006).

As a methodology, action research follows a systematic cycle of review, plan, act and evaluate (Elliot 1991; McNiff & Whitehead 2006; Zubert-Skerrit 1996). The research focus is on an insider approach, as practitioners systematically implement the cycle to gain better insight into what they are doing and why they are doing it, and how they could improve (McNiff & Whitehead 2006). Improvements discovered in this way, as opposed to those that have been formulated by 'outsiders' who are not part of this community of practice and who may not experience the same problems and issues on an ongoing basis, are more likely to be implemented and contribute to sustained change. In my experience, if curriculum changes are imposed from the outside and do not fully involve the participants in defining the problem, setting goals and learning how to take action to reach them, how to evaluate progress and to change their practices according to what they are learning, then any change is likely to remain fleeting. Once the external 'trainers' or evaluators leave, academics are likely to revert to 'old ways' of doing things because they have not internalised the change.

Following an action research process, each member of this community of practice involved in curriculum development and implementation would identify their own educational values, agreed on in accordance with the theoretical paradigm adopted by the team. These values (including, but not limited to inclusion, people-centredness, democracy, social justice, compassion and respect) are then used as guiding principles to which they hold themselves accountable, and against which they can evaluate curriculum content and pedagogical practices. Yet they are not working in isolation, since collaboration is vital to the success of this process. Kemmis and McTaggart (2000:580) explain this individual/group relationship in the following way:

The approach is only action research when it is collaborative, though it is important to realise that the action research of the group is achieved through the critically examined action of individual group members.

Validation of their work and learning is provided by other members of the community of practice to whom they regularly submit their accounts of their own learning, stemming from the cycles of critical reflection and action. These 'critical friends' offer constructive and critical feedback, legitimising changes and improvements in the curriculum. Since all members of the programme team are involved in this process, and actively participate in it themselves, all academics are aware of exactly what outcomes the others have included in their respective modules, why they have included them and what pedagogical practices have been chosen to teach and assess them. Programme coherence is thereby improved, and the curriculum is collectively monitored to ensure that content and practices adhere to the original ontological and epistemological values on which it was based. An added outcome of such a process is usually an increase

in motivation, enthusiasm, involvement and collaboration among programme team members as space is created for co-operative learning (Conolly 2010; Wood 2009). Collaborative climates are much more likely to promote excellence in curriculum design and implementation and professional development of the practitioners.

ACTION RESEARCH AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: AN EXAMPLE FROM HIV EDUCATION

This section explains in detail the process of curriculum inquiry according to an action research (AR) approach. I explain how I have come to learn that an AR approach can help to reduce my concerns regarding curriculum development and implementation by detailing how epistemological, educational and ontological values can be used to guide practitioners in curriculum design, implementation and evaluation. Action research is based on the belief that transformation of social and educational constructs calls for a commitment to working with diverse perspectives and multiple voices (Reason & Torbert 2001:6) to create a curriculum that is suitable for a specific context in a specific time.

I am currently engaged in a research project that explores how an AR approach can be used to research, develop and evaluate best practices for the transformation of the curricula of pre-service teacher education programmes so that they are relevant and responsive to the realities of teaching in the age of AIDS. Although the project is still in its early stages, colleagues working together on this endeavour will follow the process suggested by McNiff and Whitehead (2006), and attempt to find answers to the following questions: What is our concern? Why are we concerned? What can we do to improve the situation? How will we know when we have improved the situation? What have we learnt from our intervention? What are the implications for our future curriculum development and implementation?

What is our concern and why are we concerned?

According to research, the focus in most training programmes offered to teachers seems to have been more on the bio-medical approach to HIV prevention and education, with little attention paid to the development of the teachers' ontological and epistemological values and beliefs around HIV prevention and care (Badcock Walters, Kelly & Görgens 2004; Campbell 2003). The emphasis has been on how to 'change' the learners to lessen the risk of infection, and not on how to adapt teacher practices in order to best educate, support and care for learners who are living in societies affected by HIV and AIDS (Wood 2010). Since South African youth still demonstrate high rates of HIV infection, even though they are knowledgeable about the transmission and prevention of HIV (Campbell & MacPhail 2002), it is obvious that teachers will have to address more than knowledge alone in their prevention programmes. The purpose of the study was therefore to explore ways that HIV education could be included in teacher education programmes to prepare teachers to live and work in contexts characterised by the effects of the pandemic.

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The first step in the study, following an action research approach, was to gather data about the existing situation in our specific context (McNiff & Whitehead 2006), as academics engaged in exploring ways that HIV and AIDS education could be integrated into the curriculum. Findings from qualitative, individual interviews conducted with teacher educators in the faculty (11 in total) highlighted some serious concerns about the curriculum development and implementation process, which are discussed below.

Lack of cohesion across programme

There were indications that lecturers on specific programmes had little idea what other modules in the programme addressed HIV and AIDS, as indicated by the quotation below:

I think, look I don't really, as I say, I don't for instance know ... Where I sit, I coordinate this module, I don't know in which other modules it is being presented at which years, so I think what we all need to do is to sit first ...

Another comment was, "It would be really nice to find out from the others how they actually integrate it." This underlines the point that curriculum development may remain an isolated process, where each module coordinator changes (or does not change) his or her module from year to year, without knowing what changes others are making and checking to see if the changes are in line with the theoretical paradigm informing the curriculum; if there are changes that would lead to duplication or omission of important aspects of the curriculum content and outcomes; and if these changes are in the best interests of curriculum outcomes and student learning, or if they are perhaps done in a bid to simplify the teaching and assessment process.

Improvement and development is not ongoing

Curriculum development appears to be regarded as a one-off process by many, as indicated by comments such as the following:

The xxx modules that I wrote five or six years ago have not been changed one scrap! They were taken from me and given to somebody as a module coordinator and two weeks ago I was pulling up the modules to see how they had progressed over the last five or six years – nothing has changed, so I think we pay lip service ...

It is understandable that such things happen, given the high workload and need to move academics between programmes, but such a scenario could be avoided if curriculum development were regarded as an ongoing process, where space and time is created for the whole team to look at what they have been doing, how successful it has been, what needs to be changed and how it could be changed. Individual lecturer reflections presented to team members could then be critically appraised by the team, using the agreed on values and paradigmatic principles as "living standards of judgement" (Whitehead 1989:44) to ensure that changes and developments to individual modules are in keeping with the stated outcomes of the curriculum and that the curriculum remains contextually relevant to the changing educational environment. Since social forces in society are one of the "foundations of curriculum" (Wiles &

Bondi 1998:17), and since these are changing at such a fast pace today, it stands to reason that university curricula have to make sure they keep abreast in order to remain relevant.

Individual decisions made regarding curriculum content

Another concern that was highlighted is that some lecturers were choosing not to integrate HIV education into their modules. The reasons given for this varied. They included fear that students might be led to share and disclose personal status to the lecturer (“I cannot have disclosure”; “I have not got to the emotion behind it, I think that is because I am a little bit scared of it”); a lack of confidence in their own knowledge of what content to include and how to integrate it (“I am committed to making our module ‘HIV-friendly’, but to be quite honest I don’t know how”); and not recognising the importance of it. As one participant said:

The reasons why I or one of us would not integrate is affected by his or her own epistemology, you know, his or her own attitude and denial. We need to acknowledge that we come from different cultural backgrounds.

Since the AR process starts with identification of epistemological and ontological values and a critical reflection on how they are being operationalised in practice, such responses could be minimised, as lecturers are helped to compare what they are doing to what they should be doing according to the basic values and paradigm informing the curriculum.

Discrepancy between accepted outcomes and implementation in practice

What is theoretically accepted as important curriculum outcomes and content is not always reflected in actual implementation. As one lecturer put it, “What I believe and what I do are two different things. I believe it should be out there” (in the curriculum), but the same lecturer said they had “shied away” from introducing anything more than statistics around HIV and AIDS, resulting in teaching around it being done “in a very impersonal way”, which the lecturer thought was not very effective. This emphasises the need for lecturers to reflect critically on their own feelings, attitudes, fears, needs and beliefs and to share these with colleagues, so that they can arrive at some kind of agreement on what should be addressed and how it could be included meaningfully in particular modules that make up the curriculum. By making their values explicit and by explicitly identifying and sharing their perceived barriers to living out professed values, professional development interventions could be instigated to help lecturers develop their understanding of HIV education and minimise personal and professional barriers to effective implementation. By holding themselves accountable to their values and to the rest of the team, it would reduce the gap between theory and practice, between what they believe they should be doing and what they actually do, and avoid situations arising. One lecturer made the following comment in this regard:

I put a little [HIV education] in our FET but it is not enough. I kind of patted myself on the back and said, ‘Okay, it is done now, it is in our curriculum,’ and I kind of thought it was okay, because we had XXX teaching them the nitty-gritty.

PART THREE • METHODS FOR INTERROGATING, REVISIONING AND IMPLEMENTING CURRICULUM CHANGE**What can we do to improve the situation and how will we know when it has improved?**

The concerns outlined above provide insights into what the next step in the action research process of curriculum transformation should be. All academics involved in a particular programme can now be brought together to discuss these concerns, brainstorm ways to overcome problematic issues and collectively decide on action to be taken to ensure that everyone has a compatible understanding of what HIV education entails; that everyone feels comfortable in addressing it or is able to negotiate ways that would make them feel more comfortable; that all are knowledgeable about the different pedagogical practices that can enhance HIV integration; and, most importantly, that all are committed to reflect critically on their own practice to ensure continual learning and improvement.

Findings from the baseline study were not all negative. They also indicated a marked difference between those lecturers who had already begun to conduct inquiries into their own practice and those who had not yet started to do so. Those who had were clear on why they were integrating HIV education and how it linked with their personal values. One example of this positive attitude is clear from the following comment: "I think it is my social responsibility, you know as a lecturer, to make sure that students are aware of the issues and that they can talk about them."

The lecturers had also accepted that to be able to integrate HIV education, they had to make sure they were knowledgeable enough to do so. By reflecting on her reluctance to teach about HIV, one lecturer came to the conclusion that her knowledge was limited and she decided to research it for herself and to think about ways in which she could integrate it. The lecturers who had started this process of inquiry into their own practices had developed interesting and unique ways of integration, for example by using interactive drama, case studies and even self-disclosure of experiences with people with HIV and AIDS. They had begun to gather data about the influence their teaching had had on students and their own learning, and had started to produce accounts of how their learning had developed in this area, some of which had been published in scientific journals. Listening to these lecturers speak about what they were doing, it was also apparent that they were passionate and motivated about their teaching in general.

Reflection within the interview itself already motivated one lecturer to move to make changes to the curriculum:

Perhaps this interview is a positive thing and the timing is right because I have to rewrite, to change some modules. Um, change the assignments for example, and now perhaps the thought of doing it is revived because nobody asked me over the last two years so I could just leave it and let it die.

Lecturers also mentioned the need to reflect on and change their pedagogical approaches since placing themselves in the position of the 'knowers' and the students as the 'unknowing' made no sense in the context of HIV and AIDS. The students

had more experiential learning of the pandemic than the majority of lecturers, who remained relatively untouched by it. There was also the realisation that an inflexible teacher-centred approach was not suitable:

If you come along and say these are my notes, and this is what I am going to discuss with you today, and we are not going to be able to vary from this ... you are kind of sunk, because there is not a body of facts that is going to make people change their behaviour ...

Action research forces lecturers to question themselves continually about what they are doing, how effective it is and what they could improve on. Questions such as: Am I allowing opportunity for all students to engage in class? Am I treating students with respect and viewing their contributions as useful to knowledge creation? Is my teaching reflecting the values on which the curriculum is based? Is the content up to date and relevant to the outcomes? How can I encourage participation in class? How can I encourage critical thinking and questioning in class? As individuals grapple with such questions, sharing their reflections with colleagues, a community of practice develops whose aim is to find answers that will inform curriculum development (e.g.: What epistemology/ontology should inform our design? What are our views of learning? What are our conceptions of teaching?) and implementation (e.g.: How can we ensure that what the students are learning is relevant? How can each module address the aspects we have identified? How can we ensure that we do not duplicate unnecessarily or omit important information? What teaching and learning strategies will work best to ensure maximum participation, critical thinking and change in our students?). The questions are endless, but the values-based inquiry undertaken both individually and collectively will enhance the curriculum development process and the product.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT FROM OUR INTERVENTION? WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR FUTURE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION?

Although this research project is still in its first stages, the data collected so far indicates clearly that HIV material and outcomes cannot simply be dropped into a curriculum and that there is a need for curriculum development and transformation at a programme level. Although the data generated by the interviews revealed that some lecturers are actively engaged in addressing HIV integration, there is no platform for them to share what they are learning, outside of writing it up for a publication. This means that colleagues working on the same programme are unaware of what the others are doing and therefore an important learning opportunity is lost. If academics teaching on a specific programme could share their research findings to contribute to the collective design and evaluation of the curriculum, on an ongoing basis, then it would be more likely that what we are teaching to prospective educators would be more relevant to preparing them for the reality of teaching in a world burdened by HIV and AIDS.

On a more general level, an action research approach such as the one described above would also help to ensure that academic quality is promoted, since each lecturer would be responsible for not only monitoring his or her own practice, but also critically

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validating the work of colleagues. In this way, curriculum development and evaluation would be approached from an 'insider' perspective, rather than focusing on externally stipulated criteria. The aim of action research is to improve educational practice and advance knowledge and theory related to "how things can be done and why" (McNiff & Whitehead 2006:1). Through critical self-reflection and group reflection, academics can think about what they are doing and why, raise questions and concerns and brainstorm ways to address these. By having standards of judgement that have been collectively agreed on, quality assurance becomes a personal undertaking, and thus more likely to be carried out with integrity, since academics will be accountable primarily to themselves and their values, and not only to an external evaluator.

Since participation is a non-negotiable value underpinning action research, the process is inclusive of all, allowing multiple voices and opinions to be heard and taken into consideration. The final product is therefore more likely to be accepted and considered relevant by academics, thereby enhancing the likelihood that it will be implemented with integrity.

Since ontological and epistemological values are explicitly identified and accepted as "living standards of judgement" (Whitehead 1989:44), both individually and collectively, there is less risk of a hidden curriculum emerging in practice that might taint the integrity of the intended outcomes. Critical self-reflection and group validation promotes transparency and integrity in the curriculum content and pedagogical practices, ensuring that the intended and enacted curriculum are as similar as possible (Hoadley & Jansen 2009).

The participative and interactive process tends to foster collegiality and to generate enthusiasm and interest among academics (Conolly 2010). This results in active participation in ongoing curriculum inquiry, leading to continual development and improvement. As one lecturer commented, regarding her motivation to change what and how she was teaching, "I do need a kick in the butt, now and again!"

The action research process, I would argue, could help academics to develop a more intrinsic approach to curriculum development than this quote suggests.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have argued for the implementation of an action research process, of the values-based self-inquiry genre, to promote coherence and relevance in curriculum development and implementation. Through the provision of an example from HIV education, the data have provided evidence that curriculum development and inquiry is not always undertaken in a coherent, systematic and critical manner, and that it requires participation from all involved. The dangers of working in isolation, without strong guiding values and principles, are evident from the examples provided. A case has been made for the adoption of an action research approach to the curriculum development process to ensure that it is dynamic, flexible, culturally and contextually relevant and inclusive of multiple views and voices. Since action research comprises

an ongoing quest for improvement, curriculum development remains a constant and integral component of the academic practices of faculty, thereby enhancing quality assurance and increasing the potential that what students learn may actually enable them to become teachers that are truly prepared for current educational contexts.

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