# Chapter 11

# Ushering Transformative Change:
## Infusing De–Colonized Cultural Changes Into South African Curriculum and Andragogical Practices

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## ABSTRACT

*The aim of this chapter is to deliberate on the possibilities of transformation in the education system in relation to the pervasiveness of neo-liberalism that promotes the marginalization of indigenous knowledge systems of countries in the "global South." From 2006 to 2009 various policies were configured in recognition of the rights for social equality and the development of an inclusive education system in the country. However, the delay in the transformation of the education system has erupted into protest activities by students at some academic institutions in the country – the # Fees Must Fall and the Decolonising of curriculum campaigns. The transformative learning theory will be used in this instance to explore the limits of a compensatory education system in relation to the current pathological social settings associated with manifesting the expected changes in the learning sphere. This chapter is a baseline analysis of the scope of possibilities of a multicultural perspective in this regard.*

## INTRODUCTION

In 1994 the South African government of national unity ushered in a democratic era, which was accompanied by high hopes for an improvement in the daily lives of all citizens, as well as the possibility of a curriculum change in the academic sphere to meet the needs of the integrated populace. In particular, it was the black majority – which was the segment of the population most severely disadvantaged during the apartheid era – whose needs required attention. However, the curriculum in the South African education system remains largely unchanged (Collins & Millard, 2013, p.71).

Beckmann (2016, p.300) argues that improvement with a view to transformation of the academic sphere – specifically in terms of language, curriculum and access – is essential if South Africa is to meet the aspirations of the country in terms of poverty alleviation and parity. Consequently, academic development has significance for other forms of improvement. The education system in South Africa was used by the colonising forces in the past centuries to entrench a narrow cultural perspective (Beckmann, 2016; Do Vale, 2016, p.600) and to perpetuate unequal development among people. It was further moulded by segregation policies regarding political and cultural aspects. When assessing progress in the curriculum transformation in the broader education sector, the situation has been inverted. The inclusivity approach attempts to change the exclusionary politics of the traditional curriculum that reinforces the "litany, now without scholarly foundation of curriculum objectives, design, implementation and evaluation" (Pinar, 2009, p.6). The current situation is not necessarily because of segregation, but, more subtly, is the outcome of a lack of political will to transform the broader educational sphere. This situation suggests a need for change in education practices to ensure an education system that enhances justice and equality. Collins and Millard (2013) argue that it is unjust for the previously disadvantaged communities to have to adapt to a system that disregarded their cultural values. Thus, the educational sphere should be transformed in order to be relevant to the aspirations of a democratic South Africa (Pinar, 2009, p.318). Besides the rising cost of education, there is also a dramatic increase in the student dropout rate, which is accompanied by "ill-equipped" educators to teach a transformed syllabus in tertiary institutions. This can be viewed as a constraint in meeting the ideal of education for all (Zuze, 2012, p.45). Though equal access to education has been publicly promoted, the reality is that disadvantaged communities are still denied such access. This suggests that stakeholders, such as government and education institutions, need to seriously consider practical strategies to provide emancipatory education that guarantees sound learning for all (Beckmann, 2016, p.289; Do Vale, 2016, p.593).

This chapter postulates that curriculum change is failing for a variety of reasons, and not only because of the interrelated effects of the deficiency of relevant human capital. In exploring this matter further, the transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1978) will be used to analyse the limitations of a compensatory education system in relation to the current pathological social settings. The periphery-centre paradigm, which prohibits associated stakeholders from manifesting the expected changes – especially when it comes to the relevance of the education system from a pluralistic perspective – will be discussed.

## BACKGROUND

Historically, the education system in South Africa was based on the apartheid policy, with a curriculum that catered for the cultural values of one particular group – the white minority (Kallaway, 2002, p.2). Although the white minority comprised both Dutch and English interests, the education policy emphasised a curriculum that ensured that blacks became the "hewers of wood and drawers of water" (Kallaway, 2002, p.12; Hale, 2010, p.8). Over the past two decades, a multicultural education approach to the curriculum has begun to emerge (Garriott, Reiter & Brownfield, 2016, p.158). However, the slow rate of change in the curriculum – moving away from the theory and practice that characterised the apartheid approach – remains a matter of grave concern. According to Connell (1993, p.24), the conventional approach to the compensatory education systems' manner of teaching and assessment exacerbates the poverty of the disadvantaged groups. Beckmann (2016, p.299) argues that in order to understand these debates, it is

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