Transforming vocational education: One lecturer at a time

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ABSTRACT

The South African technical and vocational education and training (TVET) college sector faces a myriad development needs, including the academic, professional and motivational preparedness of college lecturers.[1] While attention is being paid to dealing with challenges at colleges at the macro-level or systemic level, there appears to be less focus on the micro- level, that is, on lecturers or teachers and their day-to-day classroom challenges. This article reflects on a case study involving TVET college lecturers who participated in a professional development programme that attempted to incorporate principles of a humanising pedagogy in its design and delivery. Feedback was obtained about the influence of the course on classroom practice shortly after the programme, and, again, two years later, it was elicited through a small-scale study of participant self-reflections. Qualitative data revealed that the participants had perceived a positive and potentially transformative influence on their practice, which they related to their exposure to the principles of humanising pedagogy. By revisiting and sharing what was learned in a study that preceded a new lecturer development policy and bringing into focus the principles of humanising pedagogy, we hope to inspire those in our university faculties who are currently designing qualifications for college lecturers. Our contention is that infusing these principles into new curricula could possibly contribute to transforming this sector – one lecturer at a time.

KEYWORDS

TVET college; TVET lecturer; humanising pedagogy; capabilities approach; professional development programme; vocational pedagogy

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1   The world over, those who teach in vocational settings are referred to variously and interchangeably as 'vocational teachers', 'college lecturers', 'educators', and so on. In South African TVET colleges those who teach are referred to as 'college lecturers' and we use this term predominantly in this article.

Introduction

There can be little doubt that the South African technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector has been preoccupied with change at the macro-level or systemic level during the past 15 years or so – as successive policy documents indicate (see, inter alia, the National plan for FET colleges, 2008; FET Colleges Amendment Act 3 of 2012; *White Paper on post-school education and training*, 2013). Given the large number of youths (about 3.1 million) who are not in employment, education or training, also referred to as NEETs (DHET, 2013a), and the many policy intentions for TVET which have yet to be realised (DHET, 2013b; Gewer, 2016), systemic change still has some way to go. This article argues that attention should be paid to the micro-levels at which transformation might occur, for instance at the level of the vocational college lecturer engaged at the coalface of change in the TVET classroom.

According to Lucas, Spencer and Claxton (2012:13):

> The effectiveness of all education systems depends critically on the quality of teaching and learning in the classrooms, workshops, laboratories and other spaces in which education takes place. While outstanding teachers (including lecturers, trainers, tutors, and coaches), engaged students, well-designed courses, facilities which are fit for purpose, and a good level of resources are necessary if any kind of educational provision is to be excellent, they alone are not sufficient. The real answers to improving outcomes from vocational education lie in the 'classroom', in understanding the many decisions teachers take as they interact with students.

TVET lecturers have operated within an environment of uncertainty and instability since 1998, thanks to policies that have had an impact on college structures, governance, management, staffing, students and curricula (Gewer, 2016). In the main (but not exclusively), funding constraints have led to widespread student and lecturer protest action (HSRC, 2005; Nkosi, 2012), and these have resulted in strained lecturer–student interactions that have had a negative influence on teaching and learning and have exacerbated what were already dismal pass and throughput rates (HSRC, 2005:46). A factor that has been associated with poor student performance in TVET has been that a large number of lecturers (approximately 50%) are professionally either unqualified or underqualified (Mgijima & Marobe, 2012), with 42% having had fewer than three years' lecturing experience. The rapidly growing student population since 1995, whose expansion has not been accompanied by a concomitant increase in the number of college lecturers, together with the changes in college curricula, have led to a range of sheer challenges for college lecturers (McBride, Papier & Needham, 2009; Blom, 2016b).

Need for humanising pedagogies

Efforts to transform colleges, however, have not occurred in a vacuum. On the contrary, they have been part of the transition to a new dispensation since the election of a democratic

government in a South African post-apartheid context that necessitated the dismantling of previous discriminatory, racialised and dehumanising systems and structures. In this regard, education and training in South Africa could be described as taking place in a 'post-conflict and traumatised' society (Keet et al., 2009) in which the principle of 'mutual vulnerability' (Keet et al., 2009) should be embraced in order that unequal power relationships are confronted and dealt with both in the domain of education and elsewhere. Such an approach finds resonance in the critical pedagogical theorising of Freire (1972; Giroux & Freire, 1986), which provides a framework for humanising pedagogies that attempt to establish trust, reconciliation and an understanding of the many forms of dominance by one over another.

It is against a background of profound hurt and distrust that we believe lecturers in the TVET sector could benefit from incorporating the principles of a humanising pedagogy (Zinn & Rodgers, 2012) into their teaching practice. In this pedagogical orientation, the humanity of both lecturer and student is acknowledged and respected in a situation where learning is co-constructed, and it is in the college classrooms, workshops, laboratories, simulation venues and offices – the spaces where lecturers and students encounter one another – that this process must begin. Zinn and Rodgers (2012) attempt to shed light on the implementation of a humanising pedagogy by asking a number of questions. For example, 'How do we get beneath the rhetoric to the praxis of a humanising pedagogy?'; 'What does a humanising pedagogy look and feel like?'; and 'What does it require of us in the context of teaching and learning environments and interactions?'.

Wedekind (2010) describes TVET college lecturers as suffering from 'change fatigue', ascribing terms such as 'disempowerment', 'disillusionment', 'depersonalisation' and 'alienation' to reflect lecturer responses to 'changes in curriculum, the nature of the new learners, and the management of the colleges' (2010:311). On the other hand, the high failure and dropout rates in the TVET sector have, in addition to lecturer inadequacies, been ascribed to students' cognition challenges, as well as low levels of motivation and self-discipline (Papier, 2012), in addition to the fact that many TVET college students enter colleges with, inter alia, low self-esteem and learning difficulties (Papier, 2012). It is generally agreed that TVET continues to contend with negative stereotyping, with students, first, often unjustly becoming victims of a 'deficit model' perspective and, secondly, being defined not by what they bring to the college – their capabilities and aspirations – but rather by what they appear to be deficient in. The Nigerian writer, Chimamanda Adichie (2009) refers to this in her talk on Ted.com as 'the single story [which] creates stereotypes … not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete … [and] become the only story'. An example of the 'incomplete story' with regard to TVET college learners' achievement (or lack of it) in South Africa is that the majority of students are learning in a language that, for most of them, is not a first or home language. The difficulties posed by this reality have contributed to a 'deficit view' of TVET students, 90% of whom are black.[2]

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2   The use of the term 'black' is used solely in terms of the historical racial classification in South Africa and in no way implies acceptance of such categorisation. In this instance, it refers to all who were not classified as 'white' during the apartheid dispensation.

In relating the challenges faced by black minority student groups in the United States, Bartolomé, (1994:173) states that (minority) students are generally regarded as 'culturally and linguistically subordinated' and argues that re-evaluating the success (or failure) of instruction of these students requires 'a shift in perspective – from a narrow view of instruction to one that is broader in scope and … takes into consideration the socio-historical and political dimensions of education' (Bartolomé, 1994:176). Furthermore, in her view, one should develop 'pedagogical structures that speak to the day-to-day reality, struggles, concerns, and dreams of these students' and 'pedagogical underpinnings that serve to humanize the educational process', so that students are able to engage actively in the teaching and learning space. While not a minority in the quantitative sense, black students in South Africa still experience the legacy of decades of cultural and linguistic subjugation based entirely on notions of racial superiority. It would therefore seem to be self-evident that a restorative humanising approach is required.

However, it is not only the institutionalised perspective and deficit view within the TVET sector that requires our re-imagining. In an attempt at rethinking the purpose of vocational education, Powell (2012: 644) argues that there is a need for a 'capabilities approach' to be applied. Powell (2012:646) posits that 'by putting the needs of people first – rather than the needs of the economy – the capability approach brings the discourse of social justice, human rights and poverty alleviation to the forefront'. This is in line with Sen's (2003) argument that 'the challenge of human development demands attention being paid to a variety of sectoral concerns and a combination of social and economic processes' (2003:54).

We are of the view that our case study, albeit being of limited scope, highlights the potential benefits of infusing potentially transformative pedagogies such as humanising pedagogy into curricula, more specifically in this case into professional development of college lecturers. As higher education institutions around the country engage in their curricular and programme development processes for new vocational teacher qualifications, we believe that the realities of education and training in a country still grappling with the building of a post-conflict society should not be underestimated.

In addition, in the emerging field of TVET research in South Africa, researching the enactment of a humanising pedagogy adds to the local body of knowledge on issues that affect vocational teaching and learning, such as developing a vocational pedagogy (Blom, 2016a; Papier, 2015; Lucas et al., 2012) and a vocational identity (Papier, 2011). The next section sketches the background for a small-scale study of implementing some of the principles of a humanising pedagogy in a professional development programme.

Implementing humanising pedagogies in a new programme

During 2012, the then Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU[3]) in the Eastern Cape province developed and offered a short professional development programme, the

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3   The university was known as 'Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University' prior to 2016, when the name changed to simply 'Nelson Mandela University'.

Vocational Education Orientation Programme (VEOP) to 42 professionally unqualified lecturers from two local TVET colleges. Current official policy on professional lecturer qualifications (DHET, 2013) describes 'unqualified' lecturers as those who 'do not hold an academic qualification that represents at least three years of post-school full-time study … nor do they hold a professional teaching qualification' (DHET, 2014:5). Underqualified lecturers would be those who have had some level or aspect of recognised training but not to the extent that they could be regarded as fully qualified according to the official requirements.

At the time when the VEOP was offered in 2012, official policy on lecturer qualifications had yet to be finalised, and only a few universities were offering 'legacy' or dated qualifications that focused on pedagogy for vocational lecturers. Since the advent of new vocational programmes in 2007 (the National Certificates (Vocational)) that placed new teaching and assessment demands on lecturers, faculties of education have been under pressure to offer development programmes or new qualifications that acknowledge the changed teaching and learning conditions in TVET colleges. In particular, college lecturers who had been employed at a time when teaching qualifications were not compulsory felt the need for assistance as they had not undergone initial teacher training.

The VEOP was therefore an interim response to the dearth of teacher training qualifications appropriate to TVET lecturers at a time when the need for such an intervention was expressed. The programme was developed collaboratively by a combined group of university and college participants and was then piloted by one or two universities in other provinces. The short learning programme, intended as an induction programme for new college lecturers – especially those from an industry environment new to teaching in formal institutional settings – was located at Level 5 of the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF), a post-matric level. Subsequently the programme was incorporated into the new Policy on Professional Lecturer Qualifications for TVET college lecturers (DHET, 2013) as a 30-credit award that universities offering the new qualifications for college lecturers could grant to those who had achieved the VEOP prior to their enrolling for the new full qualification.

The VEOP offered at NMMU consisted of six sections, namely:

• TVET college context and policy environment;
• Curriculum interpretation and planning;
• Understanding and managing the learner;
• Methodology – integrated teaching and assessment;
• Conducting and managing assessment, and
• Becoming a reflective practitioner.

Each of these six sections was rooted in an understanding of the TVET college context and what is required of a 'vocational teacher', making it highly contextualised and relevant to college lecturers. Within these six sections, which we offered over a period of approximately six months, the participants were exposed to, and experienced, the principles of a humanising pedagogy in the delivery of the course.

During the period in which the VEOP was being planned for delivery, the university was in the process of implementing its strategic plan, referred to as Vision 2020 (NMMU, 2010:21). Vision 2020 posits the concept of a humanising pedagogy as being an:

> … approach that respects and acknowledges diverse knowledge traditions and engages them in critical dialogue in order to nurture a participative approach to problem-posing and -solving, and the ability to contribute to a multi-cultural society.

This approach was also reflected in the mission statement of the university's Faculty of Education, which makes it an imperative for all education programmes offered by the faculty to be underpinned by principles of humanising pedagogy. As part of a process towards this, a number of interactive faculty workshops were facilitated during 2011 and 2012, culminating in a draft document containing nine principles of a humanising pedagogy (Zinn & Rodgers, 2012:78; see also Annexure A). These principles therefore guided the faculty's development and delivery of the VEOP. As a new programme and a short course, the VEOP afforded curriculum developers the necessary flexibility required for an innovative approach to the design and delivery of the course. As stated above, this programme preceded the official new suite of qualifications for vocational college lecturers and was offered as an 'induction' to pedagogy for lecturers who had not acquired a formal teacher qualification. The VEOP therefore focused on providing an introduction to education theory and practice that would help lecturers to adopt an outcomes-based teaching and assessment orientation, including learner-centredness and activity-based classroom strategies, in line with the new vocational curriculum policy.

TVET college lecturers who were students on the programme were not simply handed a list of humanising pedagogy principles, but were introduced to the basic precepts of a humanising pedagogy through an interactive and reflective process. First, the participants' own experiences of feeling humanised or dehumanised were shared with the specific goal of identifying the elements that had made these experiences particularly humanising or dehumanising. Through this process, the participants began co-constructing an understanding of, and an orientation towards, a humanising philosophy of education.

Secondly, the participants were sensitised to the strong relational foundation of a humanising pedagogy when they were introduced to, and interacted with, the faculty-adapted version of the 'I, thou, it' framework as originally proposed by Hawkins (1974) and adapted by Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006). This adapted framework underscored the Faculty of Education's understanding of a humanising pedagogy and became a cornerstone of its approach to the VEOP curriculum.

Thirdly, the participants undertook a series of activities in lecture sessions, each designed to illustrate the nine principles of a humanising pedagogy. The lecturer participants were exposed to these principles throughout the duration of the programme, as each principle was examined and responded to individually, in pairs and in small groups, followed by whole-group discussions on questions that asked: 'What is my understanding of this principle?; 'How can I make this

principle come alive in my classroom?'; and 'What activity can I do over the next five days to ensure that this principle is present in my class?'.

To highlight the role of humanising pedagogy in participants' own experience of the VEOP course and to place this approach at the centre of their practice, each of the six VEOP sections was presented within the framework of a humanising pedagogy and with reference to the three guiding questions in the paragraph above. Lecturer participants were encouraged to 'develop their capacity to observe skilfully and to think critically about students and their learning' so that they could begin to 'take intelligent action based on the understanding that emerges' (Rodgers 2002: 232). Self-reflection was invited in discussion forums created on the online learning management system, MOODLE. Together with the programme evaluations by participants which were elicited about midway through and again on completion of the VEOP, we attempted to gauge the participants' initial responses to the notion of a humanising pedagogy by asking them to respond to the following prompts: 'The aspects of the course that I enjoyed most are …'; … The aspects of the course that I enjoyed least are …; 'The value of the course for me lies in …'.

Qualitative data were gathered via questionnaires, individual and focus-group interviews from college lecturer respondents across five campuses of two TVET colleges in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro of the Eastern Cape province. Of the 42 participants enrolled in the VEOP, 10 lecturers were under 30 years of age; 12 lecturers were aged between 30 and 40 years; 14 lecturers were between 40 and 50 years; and 8 were over the age of 50. At 66% of the group, males outnumbered females at 34%. With regard to demographics, there was a fairly even representation of historically defined race groups in South Africa. Furthermore, the participants lectured in a variety of subjects and were drawn from across 14 different programmes at their TVET colleges, including Engineering, Tourism, and Business Studies. The majority of the participants had been teaching in the TVET college sector for more than 10 years without having undergone any formal teacher training.

As the professional development programme underpinned by humanising pedagogy principles and methodology was new to the university and to the colleges in the Eastern Cape, our study was an attempt to learn from the participant experiences, especially about their understanding of humanising pedagogy through the course presented. We also wanted to ascertain whether they believed it was having any influence on their teaching once they returned to their classrooms. It is important to note that we were focused on the lecturers' own perceptions of change in their thinking and practice, and the interviews therefore probed their personal development as they perceived it.

Data were gathered about midway through the delivery of the VEOP and then again two years after the course had been completed. The same lecturers who had undertaken the programme were subsequently interviewed, the authors having borne in mind that the impact of interventions might be felt only after a period of time, or could dissipate. Since the respondent group was limited to the one group of lecturers enrolled in the VEOP, the interviews were conducted with a convenient sample of individual participants, that is, whoever was available,

and also in a few focus groups. Ethical approval was obtained through the usual university process, and permission was sought from the principals of the two TVET colleges involved as well as from the participants.

Responses to framing curricula within a humanising pedagogy

Initial responses to the request for reflections from lecturers on the MOODLE platform confirmed that the VEOP course had been their first exposure to the notion of a humanising pedagogy and its concepts. The participants' posts on MOODLE provided evidence of new learning, as two respondents stated (echoed by others) that:

> *I knew nothing about a humanising pedagogy.* (L1)
> *[T]his has made me as a lecturer look at myself and the way I treat my students.* (L3).

Another lecturer noted that she believed her actual practice had changed as a result of her new understanding, leading to one of her students asking: *[W]hat has happened, why [are you] teaching so [differently]?* (L18).

The participants also referred to some of the aspects of the principles underpinning a humanising pedagogy that they had related to in particular. In this regard it was possible to detect a growing awareness of a key principle, that of 'acknowledgement of others', in reflections on the delivery methodology of the programme, with comments such as the following being made:

> *[I]t gives us a chance to say our say.* (L5)
> *… we are confident in our space to let our voices be heard.* (L16)
>
> *'[T]here is respect for each other in the class.* (L25)
>
> *[T]eaching is not just about teaching the work that's in the textbooks; there is a human side, a face, to it.* (L40)

These views acknowledging a pedagogy that encourages listening to others were expressed by many of the participants.

A principle that finds expression in African language and culture refers to connectedness, relationships and community, and can be summarised in the African context as 'ubuntu' or '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*' , which can be translated as: 'a person is a person through other persons' (Gade, 2011:303). Coupling this principle with the 'I, thou, it' framework of Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) in the VEOP created an opportunity for the participants to explore the nature of relationships both among themselves and with their students. In their relationships with each other as peers, the participants referred to the benefits they experienced in growing a 'community of practice' (Wenger, 1999) and reinforcing the strong relational component of a humanising approach. Responses on this aspect included:

> *I have learnt so much from people in the same position as myself.* (L7)

> *I enjoyed sharing my experience and telling my stories.* (L9)

> *I am learning to know and work better with my colleagues.* (L38)

Another participant revealed that she saw her new learning extending beyond the classroom, saying:

> *The principles learnt here are very useful. It is so critical for me because it moulds me, then the students … hopefully it spills into the community.* (L29)

The feedback above suggests that there were, at the very least, changes in the perceptions of the VEOP participants of their learners. In obtaining first-hand experience of the precepts of a humanising pedagogy in their own learning, they were enabled to grasp some of its characteristics, as a participant exclaimed:

> *What a humanising experience!!!* and added … *One of the things that stood out for me during the VEOP journey was that my voice was also heard … how to treat and handle students with respect.* (L23)

While we were encouraged by a participant's parting comment immediately on completing the VEOP, in which she stated, *I'm never going to teach the same way again,* we were cognisant that good intentions, however encouraging at the outset, might peter out under the pressures of classroom life once the lecturer was immersed in the college again. In view of this, we conducted a follow-up study with the VEOP participants (as far as it was possible to locate them) two years after completion of the programme. A challenge of any longitudinal study is participant attrition (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011), and, given the staff turnover in TVET colleges for a range of reasons, not least of which was the unstable policy landscape, a low response to the follow-up research – 25% of the original cohort – was perhaps to be expected. What was encouraging, however, was that 14 of the original VEOP students agreed to participate in focus-group and individual interviews.

Since we concentrated on receiving the participants' reflections on their practice subsequent to their professional development course, we allowed them to express themselves freely and verification of their feedback was not sought. In spite of the follow-up group of respondents being smaller than the initial group from whom data had been gathered, we were interested in hearing whether lecturers still reflected the understandings they had communicated earlier.

The data revealed that two years after they had undertaken the VEOP and had been introduced to a humanising pedagogy, the participants whom we were able to reach still believed that the principles they had encountered remained central to their classroom practice, and that it had definitely, in their view, influenced their relationships with their colleagues and students.

Interview responses suggested that the VEOP participants interviewed were aware of changes within themselves and their students, and the following extracts reflect the sentiments that were echoed in the focus-group discussion:

> *I had never taught before, so you have that perception that if you're a teacher, you must be serious, that you don't want to form that kind of a relationship, but now the difference is, I have relationships with students who have already passed, and they still contact me and are keeping me updated, but before that I didn't really care … .(L3)*

> *… all I can say, the management of my class has changed, and I get to know my students, because now I get closer to them, because of the VEOP, because we learned about humanising pedagogy, and ubuntu as well, so I can get closer to them, so I understand them better than before. I'm looking at my students differently now … .(L11)*

> *My students actually call me by my first name and whatever respect now that they have for me, I think I can say I have earned it and all of those students who now call me 'ma'am', they call me 'ma'am' because I think they feel that I deserved to be called 'ma'am'. There was literally a barrier. And now that humanising stuff, we are actually starting reacting and getting to know the student as a person, the student is there to participate in the class, not just listen to what I say. Communication is much more open now. (L41)*

Each of the participants in the follow-up study indicated that they were more sensitised to the socio-economic context from which the majority of their students came and understood that these circumstances could influence their students' performance in class. As one said:

> *[Students] have serious challenges which negatively impact on their learning, e.g., domestic/family matters, financial stress.*

An appreciation of the individuality or uniqueness of each student, which is central to a humanising context, was expressed, and participant views on this were directly linked to humanising pedagogy as perceived by them, as follows:

> *You look at each student individually. You look at the person, you get to know him. His problem becomes your problem ….(L5)*

> *It also taught us how to engage with students at their level, 'cause they all come from different backgrounds, so we needed to understand their backgrounds. We saw them differently after the programme ….(L39)*

> *I don't see my students the way I used to, I don't look at them the way I used to look at them before I attended … I have a sense of respect for them, and understand where they are coming from and their problems that they would have in the class. I think I started to listen better, to acknowledge each and everybody's stories. (L17)*

These comments represent an important step towards a situation in which students and lecturers are 'breaking away from their unspoken antagonism and negative beliefs about each other and are getting on with the business of sharing and creating knowledge' (Bartolomé, 1994:177). The professional development programme and its attempt at infusing humanising pedagogy principles appeared to have sensitised college lecturers and awakened a sense of social awareness, which respondents held had an impact on their practice. As one said:

> *[S]ome of the living conditions, where they [are] coming from, their backgrounds, levels of education – which [are] a problem – language barriers; we dealt with all those things … what we see a lot, students are hungry, then you open your lunch box. They sometimes wait for you at your class.* (L23)

At the heart of a humanising approach is acknowledging the uniqueness of each learner, their individuality, and the lecturer respondents definitely revealed an awakening to this understanding. The impact on teaching and learning specifically was not measured in this illustrative case study. But it was noted that 70% of the respondents in the second round of the research indicated that two years after completing the course they were applying multiple teaching strategies and had varied their assessment approaches as a result of appreciating that learners in their classes learned differently. The respondents were therefore also attempting to cater for different learning styles in their classrooms. Such changes, small as they might be, were attributed to the influence of the course, as the following extracts suggest:

> *… my subject is theoretical, so you just lecture, lecture, lecture … but now you're bringing all that, you're welcoming the students more, you know, you're allowing them to participate and things like that … so, you know, that humanising principles stood out for me the most in the whole course.* (L2)

Another respondent added:

> *[T]he way that you teach now, it's not rigid any more … it's more comfortable, you're more connected with the student.* (L14)

Awareness of how a participant had taught prior to the course was expressed as follows:

> *What I learnt was that I talked too much. I remember I used to come to class with this knowledge and I would just talk and talk and I would just dump it on them … but now what you see is … I ask them how it's going … 'You will see a safe haven in my class – he must feel safe and free to ask questions, he must not feel intimidated. That changed a lot in my class.* (L8)

Conclusion

This article has not sought to make any 'grand' or spurious claims – we have simply allowed lecturer self-reflections to speak for themselves. However, it can be stated that, as a professional

development programme specifically developed for the TVET context, at a time when lecturers had few such interventions, the VEOP as a short professional development programme certainly served its purpose. This is illustrated amply by the following extract from a new college lecturer's response:

> … *for me personally, the VEOP opened worlds that I never actually encountered; remember, I came out of the trade, I didn't have teacher's experience up-front … literally, the day I started here, I was taken by the arm, the door was opened, I was pushed inside and when I turned around, the door was slammed behind me, and there were thirty students in front of me … That's how I started my teaching ….* (L28)

Furthermore, this 'test case' of infusing humanising pedagogy principles into the design and development of a new programme for college lecturers provided evidence, however tentative, that lecturers were open to new ways of thinking and doing in their interactions with their students and with one another. This can only bode well for large-scale, more sustained lecturer development programmes in fulfilment of the new qualifications for vocational college lecturers. In the still fractured and fragile society in which college learners, lecturers and indeed all South Africans are trying to chart a course, we believe that humanising pedagogies have resonance and relevance. And that such pedagogies have the potential to contribute, in a small way, to transforming TVET colleges – one lecturer at a time.

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ANNEXURE A

Principles of a Humanising Pedagogy (Draft: NMMU, 8 September 2011)

1. *Students' **humanity** – its existence and expansion – is at the heart of a humanising pedagogy.* All students and all teachers are human beings and equal in their humanity. We are all in the process of becoming. The purposes of education are to extend this humanity through opportunities for creativity, imagination, and interaction with others and the world.

2. *Teaching is a **political act.*** Classroom and school environments as well as political and social contexts are always in play. They impact learning and can restrict or enlarge learning. *Teaching (students and teachers and schools) also has the power to impact these contexts.* Ultimately a humanising pedagogy reaches toward a just and democratic society. It therefore requires interaction among learners and between learners and the world.

3. *Teaching requires listening closely, being **present**, communicating, and paying attention.* Teaching requires work on oneself. Awareness of prejudices and limiting assumptions about what is possible frees up space for learners to be fully present, which frees the teacher as well. Teaching requires the teacher to be fully present, to attend, and to communicate openly, which is easier when there is room for the teacher's real self.

4. *Ubuntu, connectedness, **relationship**, and community – feeling a part of something larger than oneself is central to the purposes of education.* Teaching and learning happen in relationships – with oneself, with others, and with the world. Learning extends beyond the self to include the other, and the natural world, where there is mutual vulnerability and mutual change. Education is for the sake not only of the individual but the community, nation, and world. We are all connected to each other and to the planet. Learning requires hope for a future that includes oneself.

5. *Learning requires teachers and learners to have a **respect** for, and genuine interest in and curiosity about, themselves as learners and the act of learning.* A learner is not knowable except through what they do and create that comes from who they are. Teaching is a process of discovery about learners and their learning. Without genuine interest in who students might be and respect for them as human beings, doors to discovery will be closed.

6. *Learners need to be recognised, **appreciated**, acknowledged, and seen.* As human beings all learners and teachers benefit from appreciation of who they are and the capacities they possess. These must be *seen* in order to be appreciated and acknowledged.

7. ***Space and a safe space** for student voice/student self, the teacher's genuine voice/teacher self must be created.* Without a safe space, the self, like a snail, pulls back into its shell. Without the presence of the student self, little learning will happen. Without the presence of the teacher's self, relationships will not flourish, fear will dominate teaching, and joy will be absent.

8. *Teaching and learning are **courageous** acts of discovery.* They require one to enquire into/move into what feels like someone else's non-sense, relinquishing one's own 'sense', and temporarily suspending one's own identity. They require the courage to create own one's questions, create one's own knowledge, and connect that knowledge to other knowledge. They require self-expression and vulnerability. They require interaction with others and with the world outside the classroom.

9. *Teaching and learning require **health** (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual) and **freedom from fear**.* Basic human needs must be met before learning can flourish.