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Transformative Praxis Through Critical Consciousness: A Conceptual Exploration of a Decolonial Access With Success Agenda

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Abstract

This paper is a conceptual exploration of a decolonial perspective towards the notion of access with success. Attention is drawn to the significance of students' schooling backgrounds in the perpetuation of inequity that accrues from coloniality. Decoloniality is factored into teacher identity formation and professional development in the interests of the attainment of ontological density with specific reference to the black preservice teacher cohort. The view presented here is that colonial cultural capital in social justice has ramifications for access with success. A counterstrategy in the interests of the decolonial turn is the development of a professional identity where a culture of critical consciousness yields attributes that are indicative of, and consistent with, emergent transformative praxis. The overarching theoretical explorative tool of this discussion is couched within the transformative paradigm. This tool is used to draw attention to a critical decolonial social justice agenda that conceives of the university as a site for the inculcation of organised and multidimensional critical change agency. The attendant view is that preservice teachers' role as change agents is actualised through transformative praxis that is informed by critical consciousness. In this discussion, the decolonial strategy of breaking the cycle that is informed by mentalities of coloniality is poised to play a pivotal role in the attainment of the cohort's epistemic reflectivity and ontological density in the interests of social transformation.

Keywords: access, critical consciousness, decoloniality, preservice teachers, success, transformative praxis

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Introduction

The subject of access with success forms part of the body of knowledge about equity in relation to entry into, and participation in, higher education. This discussion conceptualises the agenda of access and success as part of the decolonial project. For purposes of this conceptual exploration, the notion of access with success pertains primarily to how the intersection of critical consciousness and transformative praxis facilitates the professional identity formation of the black preservice teacher cohort. In this light, social transformation is considered as contingent upon professional teacher identity formation that entails counteracting the ill effects of colonially constructed inequities. However, the various social justice issues that are part of the social justice imperative do not immediately fall within the ambit of this exploration. The intention with this is to maintain fidelity to the access with success agenda within the project of decoloniality. The delineation of this discussion is thus education, with specific regard to the preservice teacher cohort. In this respect, attention is drawn to the colonially constructed pre-university conditions that have a bearing on the equitable entry and successful academic participation of the black preservice teacher cohort.

The realities of disadvantage in the pre-university school contexts of the black preservice teachers are exemplifications and manifestations of the colonial bifurcation (Santos, 2007) agenda that is perpetuated through a colonially mentality of inequity. Within the context of this discussion, disadvantage is presented as a by-product of colonality and a ramification of colonialism. Decoloniality, in this case, is posited as an antithetical stance from a perspective of epistemic reorientation towards the attainment of ontological density. In this regard, colonality is conceived of as mind-sets and practices that have outlived the hegemonic historical epochs of colonialism (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 2014).

In the South African context, these mind-sets have been perpetuated through the colonially constructed apartheid system, which has evidently sustained white privilege and black disadvantage (Muswede, 2017). What is worth noting in this regard is Biko's assertion (in A. Stubbs Ed., 1978) about the need for a consciousness that promotes positivity that will eradicate the deliberate constructions of colonialism namely, inferior/superior black/white complexes. The conceptualisation of colonality is, therefore, in tandem with the argument presented here that access with success is influenced by factors that are linked to colonially conceptualised and constructed school systems. Attention is drawn to the three areas of analysis of colonality in this regard (Grosfoguel, 2007). The first is colonality of power, where the bifurcation of power yields two binaries, namely the zone of being (that of the colonialists) and the zone of nonbeing (that is occupied by the colonised). This bifurcation is undergirded by abysmal thinking that entrenches unequal power relations that perpetuate oppression (Fanon, 1968; Santos, 2007). Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (2009) equated this to metaphysical colonialism. By inference, his argument is that this hinders the attainment of ontological density. Those who have been and continue to be marginalised on the basis of race and class, such as the black preservice teacher cohort, are located in the zone of nonbeing. As such, they are constantly exposed to the effects of colonial mind-sets, thus necessitating a counter-hegemonic strategy of decolonising of the mind. Ngũgĩ (1986, p. 384) was of the opinion that the aforesaid serves as an antidote for what Mignolo (2007) referred to as abysmal thinking on the part of the colonialists. Elsewhere, in a different slant and context, I argue that this results in thinking patterns that create conditions that give rise to subjugated thinking with implications for identity formation (Maseko, 2015).

The decolonial counterstrategy, as it is envisioned in this paper, is proffered in part through a decolonially constructed critical agency. Here, critical agency entails counteracting hegemonic forces and epistemic practices at an individual level with transformative implications for identity formation and social transformation. This paper provides pointers to social transformation from the perspective

of transformative praxis and its implications for preservice teachers' critical agency and ontological emancipation.

The second area of analysis is coloniality of knowledge, which has to do with the generation of knowledge. Here criticism is levelled against knowledge that does not contribute towards the decoloniality agenda of access with success with implications for individual and social transformation. Knowledge that entrenches and perpetuates the superiority of particular knowledge bases to the exclusion of others (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015) would also be critiqued as superfluous if not obsolete. The by-product of this consciousness is a new way of being characterised by critical agency (Ayers, 2004). This draws attention to the third area of analysis, that is, coloniality of being, which is about the search of human ontology as a result of denied ontological density (wa Thiong'o, 2009). This phenomenon is conceived of as the attainment of wholeness, the true self which, I argue, should have its genesis in the pre-university schooling context. The assertion here is that pre-university schooling conditions bear significant relevance for the issue of access with success.

This is partially illumined through Fataar's (2012) discussion about engagement and schooling in the South African context. He drew from a study about working class lads, which was conducted in the United Kingdom by Willis (1977), to proffer useful insights about the role and significance of schooling backgrounds. Albeit in a different mode and context, Fataar (2012) opined that schools should ideally be "more meaningful places of cultural and intellectual inclusion and engagement for disadvantaged students" (p. 53). He referred to the essentialist cultural non-engagement of a particular group of young people (from disadvantaged backgrounds) in school practices. In this discussion, he highlighted the complexity of navigating the space between the cultural divide of disadvantage and disengagement on the one hand, and a school context that strives to foster a culture of productive engagements on the other. He warned against a reductionist view that undermines the potential of schools to create engaging knowledge creation environments. In his discussion, Fataar argued that "it is in a re-oriented pedagogical re-contextualization approach at the site of the school where such a productive engagement can be established" (2012, p. 62). The aforesaid is in tacit perspectival consonance with the ideological orientation presented in this discussion about the role of schools and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997). In this case, reference is made to South African schools that, as it were, disallow the acquisition of cultural capital to the detriment of successful participation in the academia (Maseko, 2015).

McFadden and Munns (2002) tacitly concurred with the view about the role of schools when they made reference to teachers who seek to open "pathways so that students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds have greater chances of educational opportunities to succeed" (p. 359). The above bears relevance for a decolonial social justice approach that takes into account school conditions, and the cultural capital associated with them, as part of the either constraining colonial or enabling decolonial factors. Cultural capital that is, in this case, consistent and compatible with an access with the success agenda (Bourdieu, 1997) would also have a bearing on cultural engagement, as pointed out previously (Fataar, 2012). In this paper, cultural engagement would also include the extent to which students from disadvantaged backgrounds are able to envision themselves as free from internalised alienation accruing from external institutionalised machinery (Biko in A. Stubbs Ed., 1978). In this case, the machinery is colonialism, and its bedfellow, apartheid, which is tied up with white supremacy, capitalist exploitation, and deliberate oppression. This discussion conceives of universities as appropriate sites for effecting the emancipatory decolonial turn (Maldonado-Torres, 2011) that is intended to dismantle the ill effects of debilitating oppressive systems. One of the ways in which this is facilitated is through various movements and summer schools. The Black Consciousness Movement is seen as a vehicle for social consciousness that allows for rethinking and reconceptualising ways of countering ideologies that produce debilitating social and material conditions.

Steve Biko, as a proponent of black consciousness (BC), defined the BC movement as an antithesis to white racism and a striving towards the attainment of the real self—ultimately a rediscovery of true black identity. His contention was that the pursuance of black consciousness was, in essence, “the quest for a true humanity” (Biko, 1978, p. 87). In Biko’s, *I write what I like* (A. Stubbs, Ed., 1978), several instances of the BC ideology are expressed. Biko’s views about the role of schools and how they subsequently influence perceptions about superiority and inferiority are a tacit confirmation of the claims in this discussion. Reference is made to, for instance, academic playing fields in which black students seem to be academically outperformed by white students who, because of their schooling backgrounds, have a linguistic advantage in the language of learning and teaching in higher education institutions. The resultant erroneous perception in such instances is that the white students are more intelligent. Consequentially, the black students are plagued by feelings of inadequacy, resulting in what Taylor (1992) referred to as misrecognition, with negative implications for their academic performance and identity. This was confirmed by Bachelor of Education (BEd) students in a study about the interplay between language, as a cognitive factor, and identity, as an affective ontological factor (Maseko, 2015). As part of a responsive strategy to this anomaly, Biko (in A. Stubbs, Ed., 1978) showed the significance of the interrelationship between the consciousness of the self and the emancipatory project of black consciousness. For purposes of the argument presented here, the ideology of emancipation in relation to consciousness and conceptualisation of the self is in tandem with the social justice principles espoused within the attainment of the ontological density mandate of the ongoing decolonial project. Biko’s argument is instructive in this regard:

As long as blacks are suffering from inferiority complex—a result of 300 years of deliberate oppression, denigration and derision—they will be useless as co-architects of a normal society. . . . Hence what is necessary as a prelude to anything else that may come is a very strong grass-roots build-up of black consciousness such that blacks can learn to assert themselves and state their rightful claim. (in A. Stubbs, Ed., 1978, p. 21)

The above would have seemed anachronistic, had it not been for the persistent anomalies and their ramifications in our current educational contexts. The question that begs an answer in this regard is: “Why have these inequities continued apparently unabated for so long?” In this regard, I concur with Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) in his views about the incomplete struggles for decolonisation. The decolonial agenda is thus an ongoing imperative in pursuance of the liberatory social justice ideal of the attainment of ontological density (Ngũgĩ, 2009). This bears specific relevance for black preservice teachers’ envisioned contribution to emancipatory social transformation.

Access With Success: A Decolonial Social Justice Imperative

A pursuit and actualisation of the social justice access with success ideal into a responsive equitable decolonial reality is posited in this discussion to assist significantly towards counteracting the effects of disadvantage. Decoloniality is envisioned as part of an ongoing epistemic process of re-membering (or reconstitution), where the intention is to construct an identity that is geared towards transcendental emancipation to remake the world in the interests of multidimensional ontological density (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015; Ngũgĩ, 2009; Quijano, 2007). The view posited here is that this carries positive implications for the black preservice teacher cohort, in terms of their active participation in the academia and professional identity development. Access with success is associated with the idea of *open access* as a decolonial social justice imperative in the ultimate interests of social transformation. This imperative is connected to the directive presented in the Higher Education Act (Department of Education, 1997), which emphasised equity of access and fair chances of success to all who are seeking to realise potential through higher education while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress for past inequalities. This discussion is thus a reinforcement of this directive and a continuation of the quest for decolonial equity in the face of “nebulous politics of

transformation . . . trumped by empty policy formalism, devoid of discursive traction" (Fataar, 2015, p. 5). In the case of this discussion, the aforementioned bears specific relevance in reference to policies around the access with success imperative. Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2012, p. 1) observation that decolonisation "is a political, epistemological and economic liberatory project [that] has remained an unfinished business" is instructive in this regard.

The account about the disinclination to participate in school activities, as discussed earlier, is symptomatic of a paradigmatic orientation related to cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997; Fataar, 2012). Despite the contextual differences, this finds resonance in the argument presented in this discussion in relation to the need for appropriate responsiveness. This is captured aptly thus by Bourdieu (1973):

If all [emphasis added] pupils were given the technology of intellectual enquiry and if in general they were given rational ways of work . . . then an important way of reducing inequalities based on cultural inheritance would have been achieved. (p. 17)

The creation of equitable conditions for all, relates to cognisance of the role of intellectual enquiry (or paradigmatic orientation) as it relates to the cultural capital with which students from various backgrounds access academia. As part of a social justice agenda, Ladson-Billings (2005) argued for the need to uncover the various ways in which ingrained societal disparities support systems of privilege and oppression. Within the context of the South African higher education landscape, the widening of access is a strategy that has been used as an ameliorative redress measure; however, this has resulted in massification, with possible implications for commodification (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). The equity agenda, as it pertains to access with success, is thus marred by the fact that it has created a paradoxical situation of further widening the access with success gap it is attempting to close.

The disparate conditions accruing from colonality are thus inadvertently perpetuated through heightened risk to attrition and retention (Moeketsi & Mgutshini, 2014). The issue of widening access should, therefore, be a carefully considered quest that brings into view all associated realities to ensure that success, with all its associations and ramifications, is attained. This is a new dynamic concept, a curriculum based on a transforming, transcendental purpose of education that culminates in a transformative network, from which a new sense of order emerges. The fusion between critical consciousness and transformative praxis is critical in the execution of the tenets of the new order. These concepts of critical consciousness and transformative praxis are brought into focus as pivotal components in the attainment of ontological density in the decoloniality agenda. The interplay between critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) and transformative praxis (Mezirow, 2003) is a critical part of decolonial reorientation. Success is seen in the light of transformative academic participation that has cyclical implications for professional development (Mezirow, 2003, 2005). In this instance, the decolonial social justice mandate situates the preservice teacher cohort as key contributors towards breaking the vicious cycle of disparity between school preparation (or paucity thereof) and academic participation with implications for social transformation. Biko's (1978) views about growing awareness of the role of black students in the emancipation of the community are instructive in this regard.

The Freirean notion of praxis, that is, reflection translated into action, holds that disadvantaged people can acquire a critical awareness of their own condition and ultimately take ownership of their own liberation with ramifications for social transformation. (Freire, 1970). Liberation here is associated with a critical emancipatory agenda where the professional identity of teachers is conceptualised in terms of critical agency (Biesta, 2015; Biko, 1987). Of significance to liberatory social transformation is the maintenance of equitable entry and participation conditions, with positive connotations for the identity construction of disadvantaged black preservice teachers. The process of identity formation conceives of an educational philosophy that comes into close contact with sociocultural issues and

practical concerns, and which calls for a practical and theoretical collaboration (Deleuze, 1990). In this discussion, the concept of critical consciousness is associated with the theoretical aspect, while transformative praxis has to do with the practical and pragmatic part. In this case, the former is in line with the notion of paradigm shifting facilitated by, for instance, exposure to professional decolonial discussions and engagements. This has the potential to position teachers for decolonial transformative praxis. Consistent with this idea is the view that, “as agents of change, transformative teachers ought to be equipped for an explicit emancipatory, critical and transformative role” (Hill & Boxley, 2007, p. 54). This has implications for the role of the teacher as central to social transformation, with implications for decoloniality as an antithetical stance to the disempowering hegemonic paradigm of neocoloniality (Mignolo, 2014; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015; Nkrumah, 1965). This action should begin with a decolonial turn comprised of a fusion of critical consciousness and transformative praxis, leading to various manifestations of social transformation.

Theoretical and Conceptual Orientation

The transformative paradigm is an overarching bricoleuric theoretical and conceptual envisioning of the marriage between the theoretical and practical, as conceived of by Deleuze (1990). In this regard, critical consciousness and paradigmatic reorientation are related to the theoretical and conceptual while transformative praxis is aligned with the carrying out of decolonial tasks (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). These tasks are connected to the ways in which reorientation has ramifications for ontological density and social transformation. The theoretical lenses of critical theory (Kincheloe, 2007) and critical emancipatory research (CER) theory (Mahlomaholo, 2009; Mahlomaholo & Nkoane, 2002) are seen as apt paradigmatic vehicles for advancing reorientation and the agenda of criticality in classrooms. Critical theory finds relevance because of its positionality as an appropriate tool for promoting criticality and facilitating the translation of theory into practice, that is, praxis. Freire’s (2005) tacit agreement with this observation is that critical reflection has to precede action to avoid destructive activism. His injunction that theory has to be coupled with collective social action to avoid escapist idealism is instructive. Here, the interconnectedness of critical consciousness and transformative praxis is seen in the interests of the attainment of ontological density leading to social transformation. The conceptual lenses of transformative learning (Ayers, 2004; Mezirow, 2003, 2005) and critical pedagogy (Apple, 2001; Freire, 1970, 1994) are also incorporated into this framework in the furtherance of reorientation and critical agency that is associated with the professional identity formation of the black preservice teacher cohort.

This paper is positioned within a critical emancipatory ideological orientation, which is conceived of as a troubling and critiquing of existential inequities and unequal power relations in the interests of identity liberation (Mahlomaholo, 2009; Mahlomaholo & Nkoane, 2002). The issue of access with success is not only measured by the entry of the black preservice teacher cohort into academia within a meritocratic system of coloniality (McNamee & Miller, 2004; Maldonado-Torres, 2007). It hinges on the capacity for transformative agency with multilayered ramifications for transformative praxis as well as individual and social transformation. This draws attention to what Reason (1994, p. 42) referred to as “knowledge in action,” which transcends the divide between intellect and experience that is embedded in Western consciousness. This, he argued, is about creating spaces where thinkers are also doers, and doers are thinkers through reflection. Transformative learning is brought into focus because of its potential to bring about a meaning shift that revolves around personal change with implications for identity formation and transformative praxis (Mezirow, 2003). This is in alignment with the decolonial intention to reconstruct an emancipatory identity (Quijano, 2007). As pointed out earlier in this discussion, the decoloniality project is largely concerned with transformation through an ideological orientation that removes individuals from the zone of nonbeing into the zone of being, with positive implications for the ontological density of the preservice teachers under discussion here. The conceptual lens of critical pedagogy comes to the fore in this regard. Brookfield (2003) and Cranton

(2002) supported the idea that the impact of critical pedagogy hinges on transformative learning. Kincheloe (2008) implicitly concurred by noting that critical pedagogy should be about a deep conceptualisation of the role of the social, cultural and political in shaping human identity as well as the way schooling [or education] affects the lives of students from marginalised groups.

The envisaged power of critical pedagogy rests in its hope for social transformation, which is a key concern of the decoloniality projects as it is envisioned in this discussion. In this regard, critical pedagogy and critical thinking are constitutive of and in alignment with transformative learning and transformative praxis (Ayers, 2004; Mezirow, 2003). The notion of a liberatory education system continues to merit attention in view of the persistent disempowering practices and persistent anomalies that continue to harangue the disadvantaged. The tenets of critical pedagogy as espoused by, for example, Freire (1970) and Shor (1996), are regarded as pertinent to and in consonance with the liberatory stance of the decolonial project as it is conceived of in this study. In this regard, Servage's (2008) observation that the relevance of critical pedagogy is that it places a strong emphasis on the role of education in facilitating students' knowledge production and critical consciousness is worth noting. The intersection of decoloniality and critical pedagogy is, therefore, the inculcation of a culture of critical consciousness, which points towards actions that will lead to social transformation.

The aforementioned concepts and theories are deemed appropriate for envisioning a reflexive decolonial response to the multifarious situational realities related to the social justice issue of access with success. Reflective and reflexive pedagogies and teaching practices (Holmes, Cockburn-Wooten, Motion, Zorn & Roper, 2005; Mezirow, 2005; Ryan, 2005) facilitate appropriate responsiveness to these realities. Reflexivity is said to have an epistemological dimension that is conceptualised as epistemic reflexivity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Ryan, 2005). This type of reflexivity is regarded as the constant analysis of the lived experience. The goal is most often to discover emancipation via critical thinking and action (Holmes et al., 2005) with implications for critical consciousness and its association with transformative praxis. This draws attention to "a new dynamic concept, a curriculum based on a transforming, transcendental purpose of education [which culminates] in a transformative network from which a new sense of order emerges" (Slabbert, de Kock, & Hattingh, 2009, p. 48). In this light, transformative learning in education is envisioned as a fundamental reordering of behavioural modes that are characterised and informed by an ideological and reflexive reorientation (Mezirow, 2005). The benefit for the black preservice teachers within the decolonial project is envisioned as agentic praxis that makes valid and sustainable contributions towards transforming the conditions that perpetuate inequity.

Reflexive Reorientation for Transformative Action

Praxis is part of critical consciousness through which one demonstrates the ability of reflexive thinking that leads to commensurate transformative action. Transformative praxis is a product of multidimensional critical consciousness, which is informed by the notion of education as a practice of freedom and praxis, which Freire explained as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (1970, p. 36). This is in keeping with the tenets of critical pedagogy, as discussed in the previous section with particular regard to a liberatory education system. Decoloniality involves a reflexive reorientation from colonial views relating to the three areas of analysis of coloniality, namely, coloniality of power, knowledge, and being as discussed earlier. The relevance of the aforesaid for this discussion lies in the decolonial stance of re-membering (re-ordering) in the direction of ontological density (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015; Ngũgĩ, 2009; Quijano, 2007), where knowledge systems (and, by implication, educational practices) are reviewed in the light of their relevance to the decolonial social justice agenda.

Transformative praxis is linked to identity formation that has implications for the professional development of preservice teachers in the interests of social transformation. In this regard, the connection between transformative learning and education is a re-ordering that entails epistemic reflexivity with implications for the professional development of the preservice cohort (Ryan, 2005). This carries curricular implications for reorientation in relation to pedagogical practices that consciously and explicitly promote a re-envisioning of the role of teachers in social transformation. Freire (1994, p. 97) asserted that knowledge should be linked to “dialogue that is characterised by participatory open communication focused around critical enquiry which translates into a social praxis.” Of significance here is the conceptualisation of critical enquiry as part of critical consciousness that translates into critical agency in the “remaking” of the individual (Freire, 1970, 2005). This remaking can be equated with the quest for ontological density in the pursuit of wholeness as it pertains to the preservice teacher. This is attainable through a process of decolonising the mind, through paradigm shifting, and appropriate pedagogies and practices. Inherent in this are the implications for social praxis, that is, a remaking of the world as pointed out (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015; Ngũgĩ, 2009; Quijano, 2007).

Reconceptualising Access With Success in Relation to Critical Consciousness and Transformative Praxis

The term “critical consciousness” was first coined by Freire (1970, p. 36), who believed that education should serve an emancipatory role of empowering students to think critically about their education. In his view, students were to make a link between education and their social contexts. This entails a reading of the text, while also taking into account the context. Within the context of this discussion, this term is linked to the cognitive (the mind), subsequently leading to paradigm shifting and ultimately to transformative praxis. Critical moral consciousness (Mustakova-Possardt, 2004) is brought into view as connected to the affective (the heart and ontological development), leading to what Slabbert et al. (2009) referred to as supraconsciousness. Mustakova-Possardt (2004, p. 248) asserted that the case for transformative praxis requires a re-envisioning of education in the direction of integrating the mind and heart. This entails developing both moral motivation (heart) and critical discernment (mind):

Critical consciousness is in essence optimal consciousness, characterized by the integration of the intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual aspects of a human being. Levels and degrees of critical consciousness are the result of the lifelong synergistic interaction of moral motivation and structural cognitive development, leading to a progressively more harmonious working of mind and heart and an empowered unity of rational understanding, intuitive knowing and inner vision. (Mustakova-Possardt, 2004, p. 248)

Critical moral consciousness is thus regarded as a necessary part of identity formation, with implications for the ability to do the morally right thing. Mustakova-Possardt (2004) posited the view that this quality is:

central to negotiating the challenges of the 21st century, [which should] be understood as a way of being, an optimal path of human development, which exhibits wholesome engagement with meaning and positive change in one’s social world and . . . characterized by ever-expanding circles of agency. (p. 246)

The above bears relevance for the decolonial access with success agenda in the sense that the moral aspect of critical consciousness forms a critical component of transformative praxis in relation to appropriate responsiveness to situational dictates. This results in an ideological and reflexive reorientation which, according to Mustakova-Possardt (2004), translates into:

moral identity, anchored in universal moral values and moral character, [which] predominates over, and mediates, the sense of identity derived from various social configurations such as class, race, gender, ethnic or other group membership. Identity, rooted in moral models and concepts, however simply understood, is a moral imperative [which is] stronger than self-interest and strengthens and expands in the course of life, leading to the progressive integration of self and morality. (pp. 253–254)

Critical moral consciousness is seen here as part of the acquisition of professional identity formation in the form of ontological density as it is conceived of in the decolonial project. In this conceptualisation, professional identity formation is maintained through supraconsciousness. Slabbert et al. (2009, p. 49) conceived of this phenomenon as the ability to see things from a higher and wider point of view with a new set of emancipatory values. Within the context of this discussion, supraconsciousness is about envisaging education as the attainment of a higher level of consciousness that amalgamates the different conceptualisations of critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) and transformative praxis. The dividends of supraconsciousness are sustained through individual identity formation, with positive implications for lifelong learning and local community transformation. In this regard, Biko's (1978) assertions about the significance of growing awareness of the role of black students in the emancipation of their own communities are worth noting. The views presented here should be regarded as a long-term "project" that translates into a process of lifelong learning in the interests of social transformation. In this light, the 4-year BEd degree only serves as an impetus for generating the multilayered inculcation of a culture of critical enquiry and praxis with cyclical ramifications for social transformation. This factors in continuous consciousness raising to secure buy-in from preservice teacher educators who will commit to the actualisation of the access with success decolonial project.

Freire's (1970) notion of reading the world through the word for transformational purposes is, in essence, about foregrounding a social justice emancipatory imperative of engaging with curricula, with implications for critical change agency. This is particularly pertinent to this discussion, in view of the fact that this cohort is positioned to become teachers who carry the potential to play a significant transformational role. The inherent argument here is that this has cyclical transformational implications for the professional development of the liberatory preservice teacher. The envisaged cyclical benefits are the professional identity formation of black preservice teachers leading to a transformative praxis that is intended to yield transformational dividends for the schooling system.

In her research, Stewart (2002, 2008) observed black students' identity in predominantly white educational contexts. Despite the fact that Stewart's studies were conducted in an American context, they also bear relevance for the context of this study with regard to the complex dynamics pertaining to self-perceptions: multiple sociocultural identities (Cummins, 1996) and identity integration within the South African higher education landscape. Studies such as the ones conducted by Stewart (2002, 2008), reflect the need to mediate the complexities that are associated with the process of identity formation and integration. This is reminiscent of Okri's plea for an education that "awakens . . . genius rather than one that merely fills them with facts" (cited in Maseko, 2015, p. 157), expressed in a speech he delivered at the University of South Africa's Institute of African Renaissance. And:

Education ought to educate us to understand our world, instilling confidence [without which we will] fail to achieve our true potential. . . . the radiant truth that begins with self . . . the awakening of a people to their sleeping greatness. (as cited in Maseko, 2015, p. 153)

Okri's observation about the role of education being to "educate us to understand our world" (as cited in Maseko, 2015, p. 153) is an echo of Freire's (1970) notion of critical consciousness to "read the world

through the word" (p. 34). Despite the differences in foci and emphasis, attention is drawn to Dewey's (1933) notion of reflectivity leading to pragmatism in relation to the association that is made in this discussion between critical consciousness and transformative praxis. His view that, "reflective thought involves not simply a sequence of ideas but a consequence" (1910, p. 2) and his observation that "the solution of a perplexity is the steadying and guiding factor in the entire process of reflection fits in aptly with this association (p. 4). Dewey's (1933) views about the utilitarian role of education are pertinent to the idea of the need for reflectivity in the direction of responsiveness. In this vein, Ledwith (2007) argued that emancipatory action places emphasis on the lifting of disempowering practices and attempts to challenge unequal power relations, with the ultimate intention to garner collective action for social change. This is in tandem with the decoloniality agenda as a search for a liberating perspective aimed at facilitating self-understanding in pursuit of a transformed world order with an education system that has broken free from neocoloniality (Fanon, 1968; Ngũgĩ, 2009; Nkrumah, 1965). In essence, the stance of this discussion finds apt resonance in the notion of a pedagogy of hope that is about bringing understandings of excluded communities and their perspectives and knowledges to academic consciousness meant to inform the critical pedagogical work of educators in school classrooms and university lecture halls (Fataar, 2015).

Conclusion

The issues that were raised in this conceptual exploration of a decolonial perspective towards the notion of access with success brought into view the role of students' schooling backgrounds in this agenda. The decoloniality project in teacher identity formation and professional development was discussed as part of the quest for individual transformation with envisaged benefits for social transformation. Attention was drawn to a reorientation informed by critical consciousness leading to emergent transformative praxis. Cultural capital and the role it plays in the creation of enabling or constraining conditions for access and successful critical participation was flagged in breaking the cycle of coloniality that perpetuates inequity. The above is facilitated through perspectival transformative orientation with self-transforming practices and a new set of emancipatory values that make way for equality of opportunity in the interests of ontological density for both the preservice teacher educators and the preservice teacher. Transformative praxis that places a strong emphasis on community engagement is presented here as a means through which social change can be effected in disadvantaged communities. As a reference point, I use Freire's (1994, p. 97) visualisation of knowledge generation through participatory communication. In his view, this should be centred around critical enquiry, which translates into a social praxis.

In sum, the infusion of a culture of decoloniality, with implications for preservice teachers' entry into and participation in the academia in the direction of social praxis, is not a short-term event. Rather, a realistic view is that the decolonial project of addressing the past imbalances, as they pertain to the preservice teacher cohort, ought to be a carefully calculated process of the facilitation of a multilayered paradigmatic reorientation leading to pragmatic responsiveness. With that in mind, the visualisation of this project is that it transcends the limited time and confines of the 4-year teacher education programme. This paper is thus an invitation for long term multidisciplinary and multilayered engagement, with particular regard to the creation of conditions that facilitate consonance between theory and praxis in teacher education spaces with the aim of achieving social transformation.

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