Accounting for undergraduates’ teaching perspectives in a scholarly teaching encounter

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Abstract
In the extant research, students’ feedback has mostly involved either face-to-face or online questionnaires administered by agencies outside actual classroom experiences. Increasingly, students’ feedback is forming part of scholarly focus on teaching and is organised as part of improving students’ learning. This marks a shift from using students’ feedback as a satisfaction measuring tool similar to customer satisfaction surveys or as mechanisms to measure teachers’ performance (a quality-oriented perspective). In scholarly teaching, students’ feedback forms part of a larger inquiry into the teacher’s practices. It involves students’ reaction to teaching and teacher’s reaction to students’ feedback guided by societal trends and the need to improve students’ learning. We report, in this article, on an exploratory study that focused on guided self-study inquiry into one teacher’s practices guided by changing workplace dynamics. Through focus group interviews, final-year Labour Relations students’ experiences of teaching were elicited and factored into the developing scholarly teaching mechanism aimed at improving learning.

Keywords: teaching, scholarly teaching, students’ evaluation of teaching, Critical Collaborative Inquiry, Personal Situated Inquiry

INTRODUCTION
Increasingly in the 21st century, higher education is embracing and entrenching the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) into its strategic missions and practices. In a study conducted on the status of the SoTL in South African universities it was found that most of the research universities and some universities of technology have embraced the SoTL in varying degrees of quality, even though some do not use the concept itself (Pitso 2013a). It was also established that the SoTL has the
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potential to transform teaching and learning in ways that make higher education more responsive to huge challenges facing the country such as high unemployment (Pitso 2013a). High unemployment in the country is often linked to the gap between graduates’ competency and what the workplace needs (Adcorp 2012; Bhorat 2006). According to the Adcorp Employment Index of 2011, there were more than 800 000 jobs available in the market and 600 000 unemployed graduates which illuminate the fact that higher education institutions (HEIs) may not be factoring in changing workplace dynamics into their teaching and learning.

In the study reported on here, the focus of investigation was not only on how a scholarly focus on teaching and learning could reveal the degree of integration of changes in the workplace dynamics, but also on how teaching could be reconstituted to cater for alternative ways of teaching and of learning. We assumed that such a scholarly engagement with teaching and learning should factor in students’ views of teaching. We also thought that we needed a different approach to eliciting students’ perspectives on teaching vis-à-vis entrenched feedback mechanisms.

Questionnaire-based students’ feedback continues to form the basis of academic development or Total Quality Management initiatives in higher education mainly because alternatives have not yet been seriously explored. In this article, we report on the innovative mechanism that we have developed not only to factor in students’ feedback, but to make it count in reconstituting teaching to cater for emerging knowledge in society, the economy and the workplace. Students’ feedback is thus an integral part of the larger inquiry into the teacher’s practices conducted collaboratively with academic developers such that agency is rebalanced and the transactional space between the teacher and academic developers and the teacher and his/her students is significantly minimised.

In the actual study, students’ feedback was collected through focus group interviews which involved two groups of final-year Labour Relations students totalling 21 and drawn from the teacher’s different classes. The teacher conducted these focus group interviews as part of a larger scholarly focus on his teaching practices. The data analysis was jointly conducted by the teacher and the two academic developers through the adapted Skelton model (2005). The Skelton model identifies four perspectives on teaching, namely, traditional liberal, performative, psychologised and critical. To these we add a fifth which we refer to as an invitational perspective which was designed and tested over a two-year period (Pitso 2011) in order to develop enterprising individuals (Table 1). Enterprising individuals are noted for their proactiveness, innovation and effectuation (decision-making under conditions of uncertainty and complexity). Excellence in teaching is now beginning to be measured in terms of the degree to which such teaching produces an enterprising individual (Castells 2001; Kalantzis and Cope 2008).
The Teaching Perspectives Model

Table 1: Teaching Perspectives Model (Adapted from Skelton 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Performative</th>
<th>Psychologised</th>
<th>Critical</th>
<th>Invitational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong></td>
<td>Elite</td>
<td>Meritocracy</td>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>Informed citizenry</td>
<td>Enterprising individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>Disciplines</td>
<td>Rules and regulation</td>
<td>Teacher-learner relationships</td>
<td>Material conditions</td>
<td>Material conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemic beliefs</strong></td>
<td>Pursuit of truth</td>
<td>Knowledge that works</td>
<td>Subjective interpretation</td>
<td>Social critique</td>
<td>Pragmatic solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher role</strong></td>
<td>Subject expert</td>
<td>Standards enforcer</td>
<td>Psycho-diagnostic</td>
<td>Critical intellectualism</td>
<td>Enabler and participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>Cultural reproduction</td>
<td>Systems efficiency</td>
<td>Effective learning</td>
<td>Emancipation</td>
<td>Freedom and independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Method</strong></td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Work-based learning</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Participatory</td>
<td>Inquiry-driven</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students’ feedback, as an aspect of determining teaching excellence, formed part of a guided self-study inquiry that negotiated the space somewhere between Critical Collaborative Inquiry and Personal Situated Inquiry. The purpose of this approach to scholarly teaching was to use Critical Collaborative Inquiry to guide and transfer agency to the teacher for unaided future inquiries into his own teaching.

Our aim, as academic developers, was to render our role progressively insignificant in the teacher’s scholarly focus on his practices so that he was fully in charge. The stage where the teacher has assumed full responsibility for his self-initiated teaching inquiry is called Personal Situated Inquiry.

In the following sections, we describe the Critical Collaborative Inquiry process based, to a degree, on the APEX Model of Collaborative Inquiry (Curry 2008) which we used to guide our scholarly focus on the teacher’s practices. Based on the developing scholarly teaching mechanism, guided by students’ perspectives on teaching and emerging trends in disciplinary literature, we provide evidence of what has been achieved so far and the work that still needs to be covered before Personal Situated Inquiry can be attained. We first deal with the troubled relationship of students’ evaluation of teaching (SET) as a feedback mechanism in higher education located within the quality perspectives and the lingering perception that SET is nothing more than bureaucratic encroachment on academic freedom and independence. We further explain what we mean by scholarly teaching vis-à-vis the SoTL as the framing concept of the study. We end the article by looking into the implications of these findings for higher education.
STUDENTS’ EVALUATION OF TEACHING: CONTROVERSIES AND AFFORDANCES

Harvey (2003, 3) identifies four ways of collecting students’ views and understandings on their teaching experiences. Firstly, students’ experiences of teaching can be captured through holding informal conversations and discussions with sampled students so as to create a slightly inviting and relaxed environment to allow for frank comments on teaching.

While this approach to students’ feedback may serve some purpose, it is neither systematic nor scientific and thus may not be relevant for the purpose of scholarly teaching and the SoTL which call for a systematic approach to such endeavours (Potter and Kustra 2011). Some scholars prefer to use a more scientific approach through using quantitative measures such as questionnaires which provide an overview of opinions through mathematical models. This is the students’ feedback mechanism that is entrenched in higher education as a quality assurance tool. We further examine this feedback mechanism in the sections that follow. Making use of representative or consultative committees is one of the feedback mechanisms that are employed but have not proved to be as popular as questionnaires. Students’ feedback mechanism can also take the form of qualitative sessions such as focus group interviews, facilitated discussions or suggestion boxes. We focus on questionnaire-based students’ feedback and alternative qualitative instruments such as the focus group interviews as institutional tools for either internal mechanism for sourcing information to guide teaching and learning improvement or as external means to meet accountability standards or compliance requirements.

We suggest that the latter use of students’ feedback has been responsible for the bad press that SET has been receiving in higher education. We argue that, with proper handling, SET can become an effective tool for advancing improvement in teaching and learning as framed within scholarly teaching discourses. Conceptualised in this way, SET forms part of improving students’ learning and dealing effectively with the post-epistemic condition in higher education, that is, the historical separation of teaching from research.

This separation was intended to drive a content-overloaded curriculum where textbooks are the primary means of informing students about the outside world in a manner that is distant and distancing (Kalantzis and Cope 2008; Pitso 2011, 2013a). The dominant mechanism for students’ feedback has been questionnaires which focused largely on surveying satisfaction levels and meeting some external accountability demands (Moore and Kuol 2007).

Satisfaction surveys within higher education have been used to determine the total students’ experiences of institutional services, levels of satisfaction with faculty, programme or module provisions (Harvey 2003, 6). Students’ satisfaction surveys are also used as legitimate tools for making sense of the complex nature of students learning experiences and for assessing quality issues either for compliance or accountability purposes. It is important to note that these institution-
wide satisfaction surveys are almost always based on questions with pre-coded answers, often with one or two open-ended questions; thus, they set limits on what students could articulate on their experiences of institution-wide services but more specifically on teaching. These surveys are often conducted by a specific unit within the HEI and often within strict timelines. The surveys are almost always directed at the management level to sometimes compel improvement but mostly ensure that these largely descriptive students’ views and understandings are used as integral part of accountability procedures (Harvey 2003, 7).

At the faculty level, pre-coded questionnaires similar to those used at the institutional level tend to focus on aspects of the students’ experiences for which the faculty has some measure of influence. According to Harvey (2003, 12), faculty surveys attempt to gather information on specific teaching and learning conditions as well as general satisfaction with faculty facilities and services.

However, these faculty surveys do not seem to be sufficiently clear and lack thorough analysis mainly because they are, according to Harvey (2003, 12), not properly linked to meaningful improvement action cycles of the faculty.

Programme-level surveys and sometimes qualitative discussion sessions such as focus group interviews serve as continuous dialogue between students and teachers and have a strong focus on teaching and learning, course organisation and programme-specific learning aids and resources (Harvey 2003, 13). In highly modularised teaching and learning spaces, such as the one at the Vaal University of Technology, the aggregation of learning situations does not provide accurate pointers for improving programmes.

Modular-level feedback is still required thus imposing huge resource commitment which HEIs are not inclined to meet unless external pressure dictates otherwise. HEIs would rather conduct institution-wide surveys than spend resources on other narrow surveys either in faculties, programmes or modules unless required to meet some external criteria for accreditation, accountability or recognition. It is, however, important to note that modular-level feedback represents the appropriate level of soliciting information to guide decisions on improving teaching to facilitate better and relevant students’ learning. We also advance the view that such students’ feedback could be better organised to provide a better overview and purview of a particular teaching practice and could lead to improved teaching which could better serve students’ learning. In the following section, we make a case for scholarly teaching as the framing concept and present our guided inquiry process.

**SCHOLARLY TEACHING AS THE FRAMING CONCEPT**

Inquiry into teaching started in earnest in 1987 when Lee Shulman published a paper that discussed the pedagogical content knowledge, and before and after this publication there have been some rumblings on making teaching the legitimate area of scholarship alongside the well-known scholarships of discovery, integration and application. It is, however, the seminal work of Ernest Boyer in 1990 entitled
Scholarship reconsidered: *Priorities of the professoriate* that catapulted teaching into a legitimate area of scholarship and inquiry.

In the first place, since its advent as the legitimate scholarship, teaching and inquiries into it have either been located within the blossoming SoTL literature or has been conflated with SoTL with no clear distinctions between them. It was not until 2011 that Michael Potter and Erika Kustra published a paper that made the distinctions between SoTL and scholarly teaching clearer. According to Potter and Kustra (2011), the SoTL endeavour has to be a systematic study of a particular aspect of teaching and must be planned, deliberate and intentional. Secondly, the planned SoTL activity has to be based on validated criteria of scholarship instead of some weakly planned reflection on a teacher’s teaching. Kreber (2002) suggests that scholarship is about deepening knowledge; conducting inquiry into teaching aspects; allowing the investigated aspect of teaching to be peer reviewed; as well as disseminating the study by making it public. We believe that scholarship should also make a positive contribution towards the improvement of some aspect of the object of inquiry and, in our case, on some teaching aspect to make students’ learning better. Thirdly, the planned SoTL activity has to make transparent how teaching contributes to students’ learning (Potter and Kustra 2011). Lastly, the results of the inquiry into teaching must be disseminated and made public.

It is axiomatic that these necessary conditions for SoTL are mostly based on notions of scholarship expounded by Kreber (2002). However, many SoTL scholars have allowed themselves to be guided by these SoTL imperatives which prompted Boshier and Huang (2008) to argue that teaching is given preference over students’ learning in the SoTL inquiries and literature. On scholarly teaching, as distinctively different from SoTL, Potter and Kustra (2011) consider three conditions that need to be met in order to declare an activity a scholarly teaching endeavour.

Firstly, an activity has to be based on some critical reflection on a person’s teaching ‘using systematically and strategically gathered evidence’ (Potter and Kustra 2011, 3). We believe that such reflective critique on a teacher’s teaching should illuminate, to some important degree, the level of control that the teacher has over the selection, organisation, pacing and timing of the knowledge to be shared in the classroom and how such knowledge ought to be received in the pedagogical relationship (Lebusa and Pitso 2012; Pitso 2013a ). According to Pitso (2013a, 199), ‘in cases where teachers lack control over these decisions then the teaching practice is more likely, by axiomatic deduction, to limit the options and freedoms available to them ...’. We elaborate on this matter in later sections. We are also of the view that such reflections on a teacher’s teaching should take into account students’ views and understandings. Thus, the imperative to elicit students’ views on a teacher’s teaching should be paramount in the teacher’s reflective critique and should form the basis of efforts on improving his/her teaching to make students’ learning better.

Secondly, an activity designed to inquire into teaching and learning practices has to be systematic and focused on some key aspects of teaching and learning (Pitso
We argue that such an investigation must consist of two parts. The first part ought to focus on generating reliable information that could lead to the illumination of some problems or challenges in the existing approaches to teaching and learning. The second part could then pay attention to reconstituting, testing and refining alternative teaching and learning approaches. We also suggest that reliable and scientific instruments be used to determine or find out the effectiveness of the reconstituted teaching. In our case, we aim to use the culture-neutral, standardised Torrance’s Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT) as our aim is to determine whether teaching can develop enterprising individuals who are capable of tackling real societal challenges. We have been able to use the TTCT scores in other studies and to determine significance through the t-test (Pitso 2011, 2013 b).

Thirdly, an activity that is considered as scholarly teaching has to be grounded on well-reasoned theory and philosophical underpinning (Potter and Kustra 2011). This second scholarly teaching condition suggests that a teaching inquiry that seeks to gather information on a particular aspect of teaching practice has to ground itself on apodictic theories of education and teaching. This inquiry ought to also consider the underlying philosophical debates in that area of inquiry especially on the relevance of the chosen philosophy in a particular epoch in education and society. The relevance of the theory and philosophy that guide teaching inquiry leads us to the third condition for an activity to pass as a scholarly teaching activity. Such an activity has to optimise students’ learning as understood in a particular societal epoch. Inquiries into teaching thus have a responsibility to not only understand the underlying contradictions of a changing societal context but to also establish the central line that attempts to resolve those contradictions and emerging anomalies.

The centring of emerging and existing societal contradictions in teaching inquiries is particularly important in societal contexts where education is tied to employment placement and the building of a fairer and a more just society. It is also relevant in situations where education is intended to prepare students for the complex, uncertain and epiphantic future. An epiphantic future is the future where its exact conditions and outcomes cannot be laid in advance so that what we know today may not be a sufficient condition to participate confidently and competently in this future. This condition creates a teaching paradox that Bowden and Marton (1998) identify – how do we use what we know today to prepare students for the unknown, complex future? This teaching paradox was particularly influential in developing the scholarly teaching mechanism that we used to tackle shifting paradigms in teaching, disciplines and society.

THE SCHOLARLY TEACHING GUIDED INQUIRY MODEL

The scholarly teaching guided inquiry model employed in the current study is based largely on the Critical Collaborative Inquiry and specifically draws from Curry’s (2008) APEX Model of Collaborative Inquiry (hereafter the APEX model) with
some important differences. The APEX model has three distinct features that set it apart from other ways of looking at students’ work and eliciting their views as the basis of improving teaching and learning.

Firstly, it focuses on high-leveraging practice, that is, it insists on evidence-based explanations; pushes for longitudinal learning where the teacher and students’ learning is organised over a period of a year or more; and lastly, it pays attention to students at all levels of the achievement spectrum (Curry 2008). The parallels with scholarly teaching are obvious as they both push for inquiry and evidence gathering as well as insist on involving either all or sampled students in the inquiry. In the case of the current study, the duration of inquiry and learning occurred over more than a semester. We developed a slightly different model to the APEX model.

We insisted that the first stage of the APEX model, that is, the stage of collaboratively defining a vision of worthwhile learning, should be preceded by the teacher’s critical reflection on his/her teaching as well as elicitation of students’ views and understandings of this teaching. We believe that the gathering of the teacher’s views on own teaching and those of his/her students must be conducted systematically and strategically to serve as the basis and evidence for outlining a new vision of learning. We also believe that trends and shifts in society and within the discipline should guide the crafting of the learning vision. The teacher and students’ views and understandings of teaching should be analysed using well-grounded theory and sound philosophy. In our Scholarly Teaching Guided Inquiry Model, we divide this stage into two phases.

The first phase relates to the teacher’s critical reflections on his/her teaching practice with the purpose of illuminating current built-in students’ benefits in this teaching practice and relevance in a particular epoch. This first phase also entails gathering evidence on students’ evaluation of teaching (SET) either through questionnaires or more qualitative instruments such as focus group interviews.

The second phase involves the teacher reading trends and shifts in society and in the discipline through literature review and analysis. This second phase also involves settling on a particular teaching theory and a relevant philosophy as guided by some deeper analysis and comparison of theories and philosophies developed over time in the area of teaching and learning. This phase is also marked by the analysis of SET data which is then integrated with the other information in the next phase of the model. The information gathered in the two phases of the process then guides and informs the crafting of the learning vision which accounts for the third phase of the Scholarly Teaching Guided Inquiry Model. The potential benefit in our approach to defining a vision of worthwhile learning is that such a vision is based on evidence-based explanations, trends and a theory.

Once the vision is outlined, the focus shifts to reconstituting and testing alternative teaching conditions as the fourth phase of the model and for which the purpose is to realise this new learning vision. The testing of the alternative teaching conditions should pay attention to students’ learning and whether students gained new knowledge, skills and competences that would make them better prepared for
the future. The testing of alternative teaching conditions is better suited for either experimental or quasi-experimental designs for its use of pre- and post-test measures which allows for a better measuring of such interventions. The fifth and last phase of the model entails assessing the teacher’s overall reaction to the scholarly teaching model and the self-study methodology.

In the study, we examined the teacher’s reaction to the guided and collaborative inquiry of his teaching; the extent to which the teacher can, without tutelage, use the model for future inquiry into his/her own teaching; and the teacher’s level of commitment (beliefs, future intentions and actions) to scholarly teaching and use of SET as means of tackling shifting paradigms in society and the workplace as well as within the discipline.

THE LABOUR RELATIONS TEACHER’S GUIDED INQUIRY

Initial contact
We, the two academic developers, met with the Labour Relations teacher to discuss how the guided inquiry was going to unfold. We described the Scholarly Teaching Guided Inquiry Model; the challenges we anticipated could emerge in each phase of the inquiry; our hope that the teacher would, in the future, use the model to inquire into his practices; and the support available in each phase of the model. We also agreed that the final-year, undergraduate students registered for the Labour Relations subject would be our focus mainly because they had been exposed to this teaching over time.

Phase 1
As a way of encouraging the teacher to critically reflect on his own teaching practices, we introduced the teacher to the adapted Skelton Model on Teaching Perspectives (see Table 1).

We then suggested that he thinks about his own consistent classroom activities and what they revealed about his own assumptions about knowledge and how it should be shared in the classroom encounters. Our purpose was to illuminate how the teacher’s epistemic beliefs mapped out his intentions and actions in the classroom. These beliefs also showed the teacher where his teaching is located in the Skelton Model. This illumination was particularly important. Firstly, the teacher got to know explicitly what he is doing in the classroom and examined whether that was the best way of conducting his teaching. Secondly, the teacher was in a better position to weigh his options and decide a way forward in terms of crafting a learning vision and, reconstituting and testing alternative teaching conditions based on the vision. Thirdly, the illumination provided us with an opportunity to find out the extent to which the teacher had agentic and discretionary power around his own teaching. Our take is that in situations where the teacher’s powers are limited, he would, after going through the collaborative inquiry, advocate for greater autonomy to allow for
improving his own practice; and in cases where such power was already bestowed on him, he would be able to try out some new things.

Once the teacher had reflected on his own practice, we agreed that the teacher would select students to participate in the focus group interviews where students would be given opportunities to evaluate their teaching encounters. We also prepared the questions that were to be posed to the students around the teacher’s classroom practices. The teacher was to decide on the dates and venues for the focus group interviews.

**Phase 2**

We then encouraged the teacher to read trends and shifts within his own discipline and society through reviewing and analysing the literature. We recommended two books as the starting point of his review and analysis, namely, the 2001 book by Manuel Castells titled *Challenges of globalisation: South African debates with Manuel Castells* and the 2010 book by Jeanne Meister and Karie Wilyerd titled *2020 Workplace: How innovative companies attract, develop, and keep tomorrow’s employees today*. Castells is the Spanish-born political economist, sociologist and urban analyst who has written extensively on changing society, economy and work designs with particular focus on the impact of the globalised, knowledge-driven economy on workplace dynamics and hence on the changing nature of labour relations. Meister and Wilyerd are internationally recognised management consultants as well as experts on training and development within the workplace who are also quite adept in reading organisational trends. We also exposed the teacher to literature on teaching perspectives and the diversity of understanding around the meaning of teaching excellence and the underlying theories and philosophies.

The 2010 book by Mark Tennant, Cathi McMullen and Dan Kaczynski titled *Teaching, learning and research in higher education* and the Skelton model on Teaching Perspectives served as the basis for the teacher to think more deeply about his own teaching practices. This book provides a combination of critical perspectives and some good practical advice on how a teacher could enhance his/her practice through analysis and critique. It seeks to promote a critical understanding of the teacher’s practices through fostering professional formation through a reflexive engagement with the teacher’s environment and circumstances.

Its practical use includes developing in the teacher the sense of constantly thinking about how to adjust his/her practice in lieu of following a formulaic approach derived from existing educational theories. The book also makes a case that academics can find time and space for their own agency in improving learning through reconstituting teaching even in the face of vitiating institutional policies and practices. It is, however, important that the teacher makes use of other literature sources.

We also conducted an analysis of students’ data using the adapted Skelton Model. Three sets of data became available to us. The information on the teacher’s reflections on his own practice and its location on the Skelton Model; the information from
the teacher’s review of literature; and information from the students’ views. This information served as the basis of the next phase of the teacher’s crafting of a new learning vision. These teacher’s encounters with literature and students’ views on his teaching were intended to create a disorienting dilemma. According to Mezirow (1991), progressive change is almost always facilitated by a situation where there is a discrepancy between beliefs and actions, where deeply-held beliefs cannot explain an experience. Disorienting dilemmas are individual experiences that come through a voluntary and unexpected experience (Mezirow 1991) which creates some level of discomfort because existing abstract schemas are unable to make sense of the reality at hand which, in our case, came as the result of the teacher being exposed to new information about his teaching. When the teacher agreed to craft the new learning vision, then we reasonably assumed there would be a modification of his belief system. The teacher also prepared an abstract for presentation at a local Teaching and Learning Conference.

**Phase 3**

The teacher was encouraged to look closely at the three pieces of information available to him and think about how worthwhile learning would be in light of this information. Firstly, the teacher focused on information on his own reflection as analysed through the Skelton Model and reviewed literature. Secondly, the teacher paid attention to students’ feedback. The last information related to the trends and shifts within the discipline, workplace and society. Based on these sets of information, the teacher was expected to craft a new learning vision.

**Phase 4**

Based on the crafted learning vision, the teacher was expected to design alternative learning conditions that reflected the key aspects of the new learning vision. We thought that these new learning conditions could focus on how students were positioned on disciplinary knowledge, degree of agency and discretionary power, classroom relations and dialogue, classroom transitions and sites of knowledge appropriation. Pitso (2011) identifies two ways in which a teaching practice could position students on disciplinary knowledge and argues that each positioning determines how teaching should proceed in the classroom. Firstly, students can be positioned on knowledge that is largely unknown to them but relatively well known to others in the discipline. Based on this positioning, teachers have often developed learning environments in which students are taken from the state of unknowing this knowledge to a state of knowing what is already known in the discipline (Bowden and Marton 1998). This often follows a linear approach to learning which favours the transmission model of teaching.

Bowden and Marton (1998, 4) refer to this kind of learning as ‘learning at an individual level’. Secondly, students can be positioned on knowledge with which the discipline is still grappling and attempting to develop. In this positioning, students are given opportunities to conduct small-scale research. Bowden and Marton (1998,
4) call this learning in the research mode ‘learning at the collective level’ because everyone in the discipline can learn about the discovery, application or integration that is made irrespective of agency.

Students’ agency and discretionary power depend on how the teacher or institutional culture decides to position students on disciplinary knowledge (Pitso 2011). Students’ agency and discretionary power thus depend on whether content or inquiry-driven learning is accentuated. In conditions where content delivery is emphasised, students’ agency and autonomy in learning are often significantly curtailed.

Classroom relations map themselves out in terms of students’ positioning on knowledge. Students’ positioning on knowledge is mostly mediated by institutional curricular culture and ‘a complex web of ontological commitments that either the institution or the teacher – depending on the degree of autonomy the teacher enjoys’ – has made (Pitso 2011, 132). These classroom relations are particularly contingent on epistemic assumptions that the teacher or institution holds which then guides classroom activities and thus sets limits on what can reasonably be achieved in assisting students to become self-sufficient and independent.

Dialogues are equally mediated through students’ positioning on knowledge which either provides students with opportunities to participate actively in the classroom learning or limit such participation.

Pitso (2011, 134) argues that ‘dialogue as mediated and constructed through the strictures of the settled epistemic beliefs within an institution or discipline defines the parameters of the level of deferment that a student could reasonably be expected to make ... in the classroom’. In linear teaching models, the students’ external expression of an internal, dialectical thought process is significantly curtailed because the assumption is that students’ learning is necessarily a one-way approach and a single-voice encounter which makes the purpose of classroom interaction be seen as the securing of disciplinary knowledge. When students are given extended opportunities to learn in a research mode, the dialogical arrangement is more likely to become a double-voice experience.

Classroom transitions relate to whether students operate within the space of basic dualism where clear questions are set for definite answers or whether students proceed from basic dualism towards relativism. The key issue is that any transition has an entry point where students are exposed ‘to the assumptive worlds of the discipline’ (Pitso 2011, 138), the progress the discipline has made in minimising those assumptions through research and what is settled and considered as unproblematic knowledge. Each transition also has a liminal space where students’ knowledge positioning, agency, autonomy and classroom relations are organised in a particular way to advance certain ways of knowing and marginalising others (Pitso 2011). Lastly, each transition has an exit point where students have either been ‘rooted in the assumptions of the discipline’, thus making them capable of doing certain, specific tasks, or have been made competent enough to be proactive, innovative, risk-taking and able to cope with uncertainty (Pitso and Lebusa 2012).
The sites of knowledge appropriation refer to whether the teacher or institution considers academia as the only legitimate site from which students can appropriate knowledge or considers other sites as equally valid.

**Phase 5**

In this phase, we focus on the teacher’s overall reaction to the Scholarly Teaching Guided Inquiry experience and assess the teacher’s degree of comfort with the scholarly teaching approach and its explicit commitment to improving students’ learning through reconstituted teaching. It is particularly important that we determine the teacher’s reaction and comfort as our overall aim is to let the teacher use the scholarly teaching approach and the self-study methodology without any further contribution from us and this is linked to the notion of confidence and self-belief in using the model to improve teaching and students’ learning. We also consider it important to examine the teacher’s commitment to scholarly teaching.

**FINDINGS**

In the following section, we share some of the key findings from the study. The first key findings from the teacher’s reflections on his teaching showed a content-driven teaching that follows specific temporal demarcations and adherence to a specific timeline that regulates what knowledge needs to be taught and when. While the rhetoric of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) is strong within the HEI and a cursory examination of the study guides revealed such OBE discourses, the data from the interviews showed that replication of industrial processes, tightly packed syllabus and technical subjects remain intact and textbooks remain the main reference point of learning. The influence of industrial images of strict timeline and task management as models of efficiency remains largely in place. Another finding from the teacher’s reflections illuminated teaching geared towards acquisition of prescribed knowledge content as true measures of performance and competence.

Students’ views of teaching showed teaching that prepares students to ‘deal with the organisation, the climate, the culture, you need to adapt to things’. This is a teaching that largely acculturates students’ into workplace practices and has a strong acquisition metaphor. Another finding indicated that students value work integrated learning as well as knowledge appropriated in real contexts rather than absolute reliance on textbooks such as how disputes are settled in the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) ‘it is important to take students to the CCMA, it is already late for us but in the coming students, it will be wise to take them to the CCMA, we know nothing about the courts’.

Students were also comfortable with the fact that the teacher uses additional resources to augment knowledge content and yearns for updated knowledge, and they commended the teacher for citing real examples of labour disputes:
If you can encourage us to get relevant or latest books in the library and tell us the latest books that you are reading and even screen books for us will certainly help.

I will refer to the Marikana strike and the other wage disputes. I think the way you break them down to us is so phenomenal.

Our aim in the study was to provide students with opportunities to investigate the Marikana strike and its implications for labour relations in South Africa. The Farlam Inquiry into the Marikana massacre with its *sub judice* conditions ensured that we suspended such students’ inquiry till after the end of the formal, government inquiry. Students also viewed the classroom conditions as characterised by understanding, active interaction, and practical demonstration of some key aspects of the knowledge content

... don’t necessarily feel the need to focus on time but on covering what you need to cover but on making sure we understand instead of just covering whatever you covered ...

... it is better to interact with the lecturer and not with the person through a project ...

... you encourage interaction in class ...

... people are able to release what is inside them and you challenge people to interact and talk ...

... what is going on practically, knowing what is going on around you such as the case of Marikana.

Another form of data that was collected was the literature review to read trends and changes in workplace dynamics. The literature review revealed sustained rhetoric of the reliance of the new economy on technology and useable knowledge as the key factors of production which move education into the heart of the economy.

It also showed learning that occurs outside traditional educational institutions and learning outcomes that include practical capability, collaborative social learning and adaptability (Kalantzis and Cope 2008).

It revealed that firms organise themselves to be active on a global scale which implies a highly mobile labour force, which in turn pushes for flexible labour and poses challenges for worker rights, predictable career path and collective bargaining (Castells 2001). The literature review also showed that the future workplace is marked by social recruiting which happens through social networks and media (Meister and Wilyerd 2010). Teaching is now seen as contributing directly to national economic performance and effective competitiveness of commerce and industry (Tennant, McMullen and Kaczynski 2010) with serious implications for higher education.
IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

The efforts of the study need to be understood within the framework of making higher education more responsive to workplace dynamics and the challenges of the wider society. The study was conducted within the limits of using what we know today as the basis of preparing students for the complex and uncertain future that Bowden and Marton (1998) call ‘the teaching paradox’. It was also framed in such a way as to highlight the relationship between higher education and the economy. The relationship between higher education and the economy has become even sharper in post-apartheid South Africa as almost half of South Africans (25 million people) receive less than 8 per cent of the total income of the country and more than 10 million of 50 million South Africans receive no form of capital as they are healthy, too young to access social grants and unemployable (Terreblance 2012, 125).

According to Terreblance (2012, 125), these conditions have revolutionary implications. The notion of developing enterprising individuals who are employable or can create new ventures has become too important to be ignored by higher education especially in South Africa. Most of the HEIs are grappling with the challenge of balancing academic principles (academic integrity and autonomy) with employability pressures (relevant skills development for employment or creation of new business ventures). The danger is, most of the time, is the reality that higher education can become too instrumental and marketised as neoliberal discourses influence and guide strategies and operations to the detriment of academic respectability.

The struggle to move towards developing not only rational and critical thinkers but also creative and enterprising students is revealed, in small measure, in the findings where traditional modes of curriculum and teaching remain largely intact and the aura of OBE at a rhetoric level engulfs teaching and learning materials development although largely invisible at a practice level. Furthermore, higher education teaching practices, while noble in attempts to change, continue to struggle to create and sustain extended opportunities for students to actively take control of their learning, thus making teaching one of many ways of students’ learning and one of many zones of knowledge appropriation for students. The implications thereof are to let the role of the teacher and the textbook be aggregated with other platforms of learning and other learning materials. The students in the study have shown that they are aware of the direction their learning should take and the kind of teaching that could take them there. Thus, the challenge facing teachers is to begin to realise that 21st century students have access to knowledge and information beyond the classroom and that technological advances have made this possible.

Media networking, practical capability and adaptability have become key aspects of students’ lives and teachers need to cope with these new challenges. We consider a scholarly approach and the building of scholarship around this alternative learning
and alternative teaching as key to establishing evidence-based transformation and change of higher education teaching and learning. We also think that it may contribute towards resolving the teaching paradox identified by Bowden and Marton (1998). There are also implications for teacher agency and some degree of autonomy that could allow teachers the time and resources to innovate their teaching practices and the study is one way of demonstrating that this is possible.

FUTURE RESEARCH
Due to semester examinations and the Farlam Commission of Inquiry into Marikana, we were unable to complete all the phases of the model. We were able to complete phase 2 and to make some progress on phase 3. The next phases were to be completed in the following semester.

CONCLUSIONS
Our discussion of the findings with the teacher made us jointly infer the following:

1. That institutionalised learning and textbook-based knowledge are no longer sufficient in preparing students for future participation in society and the workplace.

2. That teaching is no longer the only way students learn and has become less of a site for learning about bodies of prescribed content knowledge which informs students about the outside world in a manner that is ‘distant and distancing’ (Kalantzis and Cope 2008, 195).

3. That students view Labour Relations as preparing them to manage and regulate worker behaviour for predictability and control and thus illuminates a performativity teaching perspective as the focus is on system efficiency with some rumblings of participatory dialogue and teacher facilitation.

4. That these students have come to recognise the value of using multiple sites of learning for their development and preparation for the future.

5. That the teacher has come to realise the important shifts and trends that are taking place within the discipline and society which has readied him to engage further in the developed model and scholarly teaching inquiry.

RECOMMENDATIONS
We recommend the view of teaching that is advanced by Kalantzis and Cope (2008, 8) which describes teaching as:

• providing a set of experiences of learning in and for a world whose future shape we cannot predict;
• expanding traditional boundaries of discipline content which could lead to subject reconfigurations;
• recognising and accrediting things that have been learned outside the classroom and programmes as well as rebalance agency and share discretionary power in the classroom;
• repositioning students on disciplinary and other knowledge forms outside normal disciplinary boundaries which the discipline and others are still grappling with to allow for inquiry-driven learning.

We firmly believe that such a view of teaching is more likely to shift efforts of teaching in higher education away from the transmission and delivery of existing, official knowledge towards reasserting the classroom as a site for the development of enterprising students. This will happen by turning them into places where knowledge-and meaning-making are unproblematic.

REFERENCES


Shulman, L. 2001. Remarks at the Teaching Symposium for the Cross Endowed Chair for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Illinois State University, Normal, IL, United States.

