Translating Theory into Practice and Walking Minefields: Lessons from the project 'Through Other Eyes'

Vanessa Andreotti
University of Canterbury (New Zealand)

Lynn Mario T M de Souza
University of Sao Paulo (Brazil)

Abstract

This paper reflects on the lessons learned in the design and development process of the project Through Other Eyes (TOE). It explores the justification and theoretical framework of TOE in the context of development education and global learning by outlining some of the challenges and tensions of translating postcolonial theory into pedagogical practice and of negotiating complex issues of language, representation and ownership in a context of North-South dialogue.

Keywords: *Indigenous knowledges; postcolonial theory, representation*

Introduction

In recent years, strategies and initiatives that aim to build global and development awareness have proliferated in the educational sector in the European context. Educators are encouraged to 'bring the world into their classrooms' by addressing global issues such as interdependence, diversity, human rights, peace, social justice, and international and sustainable development. However, research in this area indicates that educational approaches tend to address the agenda for international development in a manner that leaves assumptions unexamined and ignores how the agenda itself is re-interpreted in other contexts (Foubert, 1986; Pardíñaz-Solís, 2006; Andreotti, 2006; Biccum, 2005; Development Education Association, 2001; McCollum, 1996). Not addressing these different interpretations may result in the uncritical reinforcement of notions of the supremacy and universality of 'our' (Western) ways of seeing and knowing, which can undervalue other knowledge systems and reinforce unequal relations of dialogue and power.

This article offers a reflection on this issue through the lenses of the Through Other Eyes Project (TOE). TOE is an international initiative[1] that aims to support educators to develop a set of tools to reflect on their own knowledge systems and to engage with other knowledge systems in different ways, in their own learning and in their classrooms. TOE was designed to enable educators to develop an understanding of how language and systems of belief, values and representation affect the way people interpret the world, to identify how different groups understand issues related to development and their implications for the development agenda and to critically examine these interpretations

– both 'Western' and 'indigenous' – looking at origins and potential implications of assumptions to identify an ethics for improved dialogue, engagement, and mutual learning.

TOE focuses on indigenous knowledge systems as epistemologies (or ways of knowing) that offer different ontological choices (or choices related to the ways we see reality and being) to those of the so-called 'Western' mainstream cultures.

This article is divided into four parts. The first part explores the justification and theoretical framework of TOE in the context of development education and global learning. It starts by identifying the problem of culturalism and its origins, as outlined by indigenous and postcolonial writers. It offers an analysis of the implications of addressing culturalism from a perspective based on 'strategic essentialism' and perspectives that emphasise hybridity and reflexivity. The second section illustrates how this theoretical framework was translated into educational language and practices in the Through Other Eyes conceptual framework, methodology and activities. In the third part of this article, the authors examine some of the challenges and tensions of negotiating the development of TOE with different communities who were part of the advisory group of the project and the strategic decisions that have been made as a result of these conflicts. The fourth and concluding part of this article outlines some implications of the lessons learned in the TOE development process for the field of development education.

The problem of culturalism

Reiterating the argument of several postcolonial and indigenous writers[2] on the tendency in Western thought to project its values as universal values, the Canadian indigenous theorist Battiste (2004) defines culturalism as an academic and pedagogical posture inherited from colonialism based on the assumption that mainstream (i.e. 'Western', ' colonial', 'Eurocentric') culture and knowledges are the global and universal norm from which indigenous, local knowledges and cultures deviate. A culturalist perspective, according to Battiste, homogenises both Western and indigenous knowledges and defines indigenous cultures as deficient and lacking.

Other authors have described this posture in similar ways. Mignolo (2000) conceptualises this view as a projection of a local (European) epistemology as universal, un-marked and neutral, which resulted in the creation of myths of modernity and cultural supremacy. These myths, based on a seamless narrative of progress, dictate that the modern civilisation is the most developed culture and has an obligation to civilise, uplift, educate and develop the lesser (barbarian) cultures (Mignolo, 2000). Mignolo argues that 'modernity' [...], in the name of rationality, science and philosophy asserted its own privilege over other forms of rationality or over what, from the perspective of modern reason, was irrational' (*ibid*: 116). From this perspective, time acts as a principle that arbitrates and ranks not only what counts as knowledge, but also what it means to be human (Taylor, 2006).

Also challenging Eurocentric representations, Said (1978) argues that in defining others as lacking, inferior, ignorant, traditional and barbaric, those who colonised others have learned to think of themselves as superior, enlightened, modern and civilised – a posture he calls 'orientalism'. Hence, non-European traditions, cultures and ways of knowing

and organising are translated into the culturalist posture as inferior, less evolved, primitive, erroneous or eccentric 'culturally different' derivatives (Canagarajah, 2002; Liu, 1999; Taylor, 2006).

Spivak (1999) conceptualises the culturalist posture as a movement of subalternisation and normalisation of difference that she refers to as the 'epistemic violence' of colonialism. She argues that, apart from the mission to 'civilise others' and make them conform to universalist ideals, this violence also implies other assumptions about self and other that may lead to further discrimination and harm, such as the impulse to study, to analyse, to categorise, to record, to inscribe, to judge and to 'consume' other cultures; the projection of one's parameters of analysis as universal and objective; the desire that the other will conform to one's parameters and categorisations and the belief that if the other does not recognise one's parameters and categories, he/she has no parameters or categories of his/her own.

This epistemic violence of culturalist postures directly affects cultural difference: 'those who stubbornly insist on maintaining their own vision of 'progress' or 'reason' face the danger of being isolated, impoverished and discriminated against' (Canagarajah, 2002: 245). What Canagarajah describes is similar to the 'double bind' facing African philosophers according to Bernasconi: '[e]ither African philosophy is so similar to Western philosophy that it makes no distinctive contribution and effectively disappears; or it is so different that its credentials to be genuine philosophy will always be in doubt' (cited in Mignolo, 2002: 70).

Addressing culturalism

The most common reaction against culturalism is the interrogation of its inherent hierarchical binaries and the reassertion of cultural legitimacy and authenticity of repressed groups. This generally leads to a revitalisation of cultures and languages in order to collectively 'speak back' to mainstream power. Spivak (1999) calls this approach 'strategic essentialism'. Strategic essentialism is a position that 'forgets' cultural heterogeneity in the name of a political/identity cause. Spivak argues that this can be a useful and effective strategy in the political sphere for indigenous and minority communities in the struggle for the redistribution of resources. However, from Bhabha (1994), Spivak's and Battiste's perspectives the limitations of strategic essentialism lie in its ethnocentric stance, its denial of internal differences and its attempt to fix an essentialist and authentic version of a specific culture or identity. From their perspective, cultures are always inherently heterogeneous, conflictual, dynamic and processual. Thus, by fixing the characteristics of a stable and knowable identity/culture, strategic essentialism, denies internal hybridity and can reproduce some of the claims that are the basis of colonialism itself, such as the myths of traceable 'pure' origins.

In Bhaba's and Battiste's view, a more effective strategy against the culturalist posture is an awareness of the complexity and non-homogeneity of 'indigenous' and mainstream cultures and knowledges. Battiste calls for the need for education to reconceptualise the 'mainstream' as a 'changing and fluid space' open to dialogue and collaboration from non-mainstream knowledges and cultures with which it co-exists. In a similar way, Bhabha suggests a pedagogical strategy that destabilises the culturalist position by

emphasising hybridity, positionality and the relational construction of self and other in what he calls the 'third space'. For Bhabha, the third space is where claims of cultural hierarchy, power relations, identities and knowledges are re-negotiated. His project can be summarised as the construction of the 'possibility of cultural contestation [and] the capacity to change the foundation of knowledge' (Bhabha, 1990:310).

Spivak (1999) also defends this re-negotiation from within. She argues that people should engage in a persistent critique of culturalism and other discourses and representations as they inhabit them. This is why she promotes 'deconstructive' strategies for the critique of culturalism. For her, deconstruction 'points out that in constructing any kind of an argument, we must move from implied premises, that must necessarily obliterate or finesse certain possibilities that question the validity of these premises in an absolute justifiable way' (Spivak, 1999:104). She conceptualises education 'to come' in the humanities as an 'uncoersive rearrangement of desires' focusing on the development of reflexivity. The aim of this pedagogical project is to establish an 'ethical relation to difference' through 'unlearning privilege', 'learning to learn from below' and learning to work without guarantees.

Kapoor (2004) has summarised Spivak's pedagogical process as the creation of a pre-disposition to 'retrace the itinerary of our prejudices and learning habits (from racism, sexism and classism to academic elitism and ethnocentrism), stop thinking of ourselves as better or fitter and unlearn dominant systems of knowledge and representation' (*ibid*: 641). Beverley (1999) defines 'unlearning privilege' as 'working against the grain of our interests and prejudices by contesting the authority of the academy and knowledge centres at the same time that we continue to participate in them and to deploy that authority as teachers, researchers, administrators and theorists' (*ibid*: 31). Moore-Gilbert (1997) refers to unlearning as the 'imperative to reconsider positions that once seemed self-evident and normal' (*ibid*: 98). Kapoor (2004) asserts that unlearning means 'stopping oneself from always wanting to correct, teach, theorise, develop, colonise, appropriate, use, record, inscribe, enlighten' (*ibid*: 642). He quotes Alcoff's statement that 'the impetus to always be the speaker and speak in all situations must be seen for what it is: a desire for mastery and domination' (Alcoff, 1999:24 cited in Kapoor, 2004:642). This implies that, in representing the other 'over there', careful scrutiny is needed 'over here' (*ibid*).

Bhabha's, Battiste's and Spivak's propositions provided the theoretical framework for the design of the Through Other Eyes Project learning strategies. These hopefully enable the development of the analytical tools and ethical grounds necessary for learners to engage with global issues and perspectives addressing the complexity, uncertainty, and contingency of knowledge construction. In practice, compared to a liberal educational framework, these ideas offer an approach that attempts to go beyond culturalism, ethnocentrism, essentialism, reversed racism and orientalism.

Translating theory into practice: theoretical metaphors
In this section, the six metaphors employed in the language of TOE are presented to illustrate the connections between the theory described and the design of the pedagogical process 'in practice' as they address an audience of student teachers and teacher

educators in England. The links to the theories described in part one are made explicit in the text and in the footnotes[3].

The first metaphor applied in this project refers to the 'writing' of identities. TOE's approach to identity construction goes beyond culturalism by challenging essentialism and emphasising hybridity. Identity is conceptualised as the juxtaposition of one's perceptions and relationships in relation to the self, to others and to the world. In line with Bhabha's argument, TOE has adopted the notion that identities are constantly constructed and reconstructed in interactions that take place in the different social groups to which people belong. In other words, our identities are 'written' in our social contexts; what we know is marked by where we come from[4]. Concomitantly, we can also participate in this construction and reconstruction by re-writing things ourselves. We can 'rebel' and choose to be something different, and create perceptions and relationships that are different from our social groups[5]. In addition, we participate in the construction and reconstruction of the identities of others when we relate to and communicate with them, as illustrated in figure 1.

As it is often difficult to notice or examine the 'hands' that are 'writing' us, TOE was designed so that learners can develop tools to enable them to examine these 'hands' more easily[6] and 'write' their own perceptions and relationships confidently; to think more independently, and examine the effects their 'writing' has on other people and in the world. This enables learners to decide for themselves whether or not they should change their 'writing'[7].

The second metaphor used in the project refers to the construction of difference. The colonial notion that difference is defined as deficiency is based on assumptions of individuality grounded in a notion of a self-sufficient individual who is 'the same' as other individuals in his/her community and therefore dispensable. In TOE, we use the metaphor of a hand[8] to re-deploy a notion of difference based on the idea of different, interdependent individuals who, like fingers of a hand, are insufficient in themselves but indispensable in their communities where they offer a unique contribution. This metaphor aims to open the possibility for learners to look at difference as a source of learning and not as a threat, and to appreciate people for their distinctiveness.

The third metaphor refers to positionality and the impossibility of putting ourselves in the shoes of others while we still have our own shoes on. This metaphor suggests that we cannot really take our shoes off, as we cannot simply forget all of our own experience, language and concepts, and we lack other people's experience, language and concepts to see 'exactly' what they see. It is really important that we understand that different people will have different shoes and will be coming from different experiences, languages and concepts[9]. Looking at different people's shoes (even though we cannot walk in them barefoot) reminds us that cultures are context-bound as all shoes are 'coming from' somewhere. By engaging with different shoes, despite the difficulties of putting them on, we might understand better where our own shoes might be coming from and where they might be leading to in order to check if we are happy with the ways and paths we walk.

The fourth metaphor refers to four possible lenses to frame otherness that reinforce unequal relations of power: of the missionary, the teacher, the tourist and the anthropologist. These are related to Spivak's ideas of the colonial heritage to frame otherness in ways that 'subalternise' difference. The lens of the missionary frames engagement with otherness or difference around the motif of 'salvation' and increased privilege for the 'saviour'. The teacher frames engagement with otherness around the motif of 'enlightenment' and increased privilege for the holder of knowledge. The tourist frames engagement with difference around the motif of 'consumption' or 'entertainment' and finally, the lens of the anthropologist' frames engagement with difference around the motif of 'preservation'. The first two lenses favour intervention for 'positive' change defined by those who are intervening. The third and fourth lenses favour 'preservation' defined by those who observe. These lenses tend to block possibilities for equal grounds for meaningful dialogue where the self is open to challenge and be challenged by difference.

The fifth metaphor is that of a scale of worth. It refers to past and present imbalances in power relations in the distribution of resources and in the worth attributed to knowledges, cultures and individuals. It invites learners to think about the epistemic violences[10] inherited from colonialism and its implications in modern competitive societies. It also highlights the complex negotiation of power on the part of indigenous groups and raises the question of what can be learned from different ways of knowing.

The sixth metaphor refers to the partiality of perspectives, the importance of situatedness and the context dependency of language. It draws from poststructuralist theory that informs some of the postcolonial theoretical strands described in the first part of this article, and the Incan trilogy of perspectives of the condor, the serpent and the jaguar. This metaphor invites learners to see a village through the eyes of each of these three animal 'seers', to explore the limitations and partiality of each way of seeing and to imagine a conversation where these perspectives are brought together. What would happen if one or more of these players decided to claim they could see the whole picture? What languages would be used to communicate each perspective? Would they be able to understand each other? Would they be able to arrive at a consensus? Would their own perspectives change after this conversation? Would they have a better idea of the 'whole picture' through this conversation? This questioning process reflects the pedagogical process that TOE aims to facilitate.

Conceptual Framework

Spivak's work provided the insight for the structure of TOE's conceptual framework of learning to unlearn, learning to listen, learning to learn and learning to reach out. Each idea of learning has a specific function within TOE's methodology, as described below.

Learning to unlearn – we learn to perceive that what we consider 'good and ideal' is *only one* perspective related to where we come from socially, historically and culturally. It also involves perceiving that we carry a 'cultural baggage' filled with ideas and concepts produced in our contexts that affects who we are and what we see, and that although we are different from others in our own contexts, we share much in common with them. Learning to unlearn is about making connections between social-historical processes and encounters that have shaped our contexts, and cultures, and the construction of our knowledges and identities. It is also about becoming aware that all social groups contain internal differences and conflicts, and that culture is a dynamic and conflictual production of meaning in a specific context[11].

Learning to listen – we learn to recognise the effects and limits of our perspective, and to be receptive to new understandings of the world. It involves learning to perceive how our cultural baggage, the ideas we learn from our social groups, affects our ability to engage with difference. Hence, learning to listen is about learning to keep our perceptions constantly under scrutiny, tracing the origins and implications of our assumptions, in order to open up to different possibilities of understanding and becoming aware that interpretations of what we hear or see might say more about us than about what is actually being said or shown. This process also involves understanding how identities are constructed in interaction between self and other, not only in the communities to which we belong, but also between these communities and others[12].

Learning to learn – we learn to receive new perspectives, to re-arrange and expand our own and to deepen our understanding, going into the uncomfortable space of 'what we do not know we do not know'. It involves creating different possibilities of understanding, trying to see through other eyes by transforming our own and avoiding the tendency to want to turn the other into the self or the self into the other. Therefore, learning to learn is about learning to feel comfortable about crossing the boundaries of the comfort zone within ourselves and engaging with new concepts to rearrange our cultural baggage and renegotiate our understandings, relationships and desires[13].

Learning to reach out – we learn to apply learning itself to our own contexts and in our relationships with others, continuing to reflect on and explore the unknown: new possible ways of being, thinking, doing, knowing and relating. It involves understanding that one needs to be open to the unpredictable outcomes of mutual uncoersive learning and perceiving that in making contact with others, one exposes oneself and exposes others to difference and newness, and this often results in mutual teaching and learning, although this learning may be different for each party involved. Learning to reach out is about learning to engage, to learn and to teach with respect and accountability in the complex and uncomfortable relational 'third' space where identities, power and ideas are negotiated. This process requires the understanding that conflict is a productive component of learning and that the process itself is cyclical: once one has learned to

reach out in one context, one is ready to start a new cycle of unlearning, listening, learning and reaching out again at another level[14].

Walking minefields

This section addresses some of the challenges in the design and development of TOE in terms of two aspects. First, we explore the challenges in translating TOE into a language accessible to a 'non-academic' audience whilst trying to keep the intellectual integrity and theoretical and pedagogical consistency of the project. Next, we discuss some of the challenges of negotiating issues of representation and ownership.

TOE's learning programme was based on a baseline enquiry which involved individuals in different indigenous communities in Peru, Zambia, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand. TOE had an advisory board consisting of educators, academics and activists from different areas and disciplines with a briefing to work as 'critical friends' of the project. TOE also invited external reviewers to pilot activities and submit critiques at the last stage of development. In many occasions internal differences were enacted in the process through the representations of North versus South, indigenous versus non-indigenous and practitioner versus academic identities. Therefore, we have kept these distinctions in our analysis when we felt they were significant.

As authors, we negotiated the complexities of the different relationships, fields and knowledge domains within which we and our colleagues were operating. We acknowledge our gratitude to participating individuals and communities for sharing their knowledge and allowing their perspectives to be included in the resource.

Theory in versus of practice

The first problematic issue arising in relation to theory and practice was related to language. Postcolonial theory is written in a specific academic language which is particular to a specific discipline and therefore, not easily accessible to teachers and student teachers who have their own specific language. However, in the process of negotiating the language used in TOE, we came across conflicting perspectives on the nature of language itself. One expressed the need for print resources to be written in plain English as the language of theory was unnecessarily complicated and authors should aim to express ideas in ordinary language accessible to everyone. A second perspective was that plain English was a problematic concept in itself as different speech communities will have their own version of what counts as plain; therefore, the project should focus on speaking teacher language. From yet a third perspective, teacher language was regarded as not well equipped to name or deal with the new analytical tools and levels of complexity related to debates around identity, power, and culture presented in TOE; therefore, the project itself should aim to support teacher acquisition of new language.

The power struggle in this conversation about language was also framed in relation to the worth attributed to practitioner and academic knowledge in different contexts. Academic knowledge and academic language were sometimes perceived as elitist, abstract, excluding, and separate from practice, whereas the practice domain was perceived as transparent, straightforward, and procedural. The response to this perception was that the idea that 'practice is separate from theory' was founded on a technicist view

of education which makes participants blind to the theoretical foundations of their practice. On the other hand, for us as authors it was important to translate the theory in a way that would not alienate learners or practitioners. Part of the compromise was built around an emphasis on visual literacy, the use of images and graphic organisers in metaphors to convey the theory and in the presentation of the information in the print resource.

The second issue, related to the translation of theory into practice, was that of contrasting perspectives on the use of binaries or dichotomies in the resources. The first perspective, generally coming from Southern project partners, focused on power relations and claimed that the project had the moral obligation to revert the binaries created by those who colonised others in order to present a true and valued representation of those who have historically been marginalised. The second perspective, generally coming from Northern project partners, focused on the acknowledgement of complexity and claimed that the project should avoid binaries altogether in order to emphasise heterogeneity and individual differences.

In theoretical terms, the problem with the first perspective is that it essentialises indigenous communities and the coloniser category. The problem with the second perspective is that, by reducing heterogeneity to the level of individual differences, it denies the inherently *social* construction of identities and relationships and the power dynamics that permeate relationships between groups. If taken literally, this perspective can dismiss any claim to collective oppression on the grounds that every colonisation or oppression happened or happens in a different way, therefore comparisons are impossible.

In pedagogical terms, by reverting cultural hierarchies and focusing on substituting negative stereotypes of marginalised peoples for positive stereotypes, the first perspective fails to acknowledge the relational construction of identities and to challenge cultural supremacy on both sides. The pedagogical implications of the second perspective point to the lack of analysis of the connection between power, knowledge and distribution of resources, labour, and value. A potential implication of that is that this perspective may place colonialism securely in the past, conveniently forgetting the existing inequalities of worth attributed to individuals and knowledges coming from socially and historically constructed binaries of North and South; East and West; primitive and civilised; developed and underdeveloped; first and third worlds; modern and traditional; etc. that are *still* part of mainstream discourses in both 'North' and 'South'.

Our theoretical and pedagogical decision was to acknowledge complexity and power relations, and focus the design of the learning process on deconstruction itself. In this sense, the pedagogical emphasis was on teaching learners to apply deconstruction by modelling the questions in the learning tasks. As deconstruction is a process that relies on binaries to deconstruct binaries, we had to expose learners to binaries in order to teach deconstruction. If the learning tasks are successful, learners will have acquired the skills to engage critically with the resource itself and further deconstruct its strategic binaries. On the other hand, in order to acknowledge the epistemic violence of

colonialism we designed the resources in a way that would allow indigenous participants to present a powerful critique to mainstream perceptions of their knowledges, communities and identities as well.

Issues of representation

The first point of contention in relation to representation was related to the word 'indigenous'. From the perspective of the people we interviewed, being indigenous was linked to having been violently colonised; to experiencing inequality in terms of the distribution of power and resources (especially issues of land rights); and, to a living struggle against racism and for the survival of their specific language and way of seeing. However, the term indigenous is constructed differently in different contexts. In the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UDRIP), the term is implicitly conceptualised around historic colonial injustices:

> ...indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of, inter alia, their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests. (UDRIP 2007:1)

On the other hand, the Cambridge dictionary online offers only one definition of 'indigenous': 'naturally existing in a place or country rather than arriving from another place' (Cambridge Dictionary Online, 2008). From this perspective, as everyone is coming from somewhere, everyone is indigenous. Although this definition is valid, in the context of indigenous struggles, it tends to be deployed to diffuse discussions of inequality in the distribution of power and resources. This prompted some contentious debates in the development group. In our role as project coordinators and authors of the course, our strategic decision was to privilege the first definition of being indigenous, but to emphasise the *debate* on the construction of meaning.

In terms of representation, although the project was not targeted at an indigenous audience, from the perspective of indigenous activists it should still produce direct benefits to them and allow for their deep involvement in the development process so that they could decide how to best represent themselves in the resources. The imminent criticism, coming from an understanding of TOE as a project *about* indigenous peoples, was that by not allowing indigenous people to be actively involved in all decisions about the project we could be seen as carrying out the design process in a colonising way by 'appropriating' indigenous peoples' knowledges and preventing them from having access to capacity building and collective ownership over something that relates to their communities. The problem we faced was that representation, in the context of local indigenous struggles, tends to 'speak truth to power' (generally to the local government) in an attempt to redress inequalities in power and distribution of resources, i.e. strategic essentialism.

The way indigenous groups may choose to use strategic essentialism to represent themselves to the government may be justifiable and successful in that context, but not so in an educational context in a different country. In order to represent oneself to an audience in a pedagogical process, one has to have an idea of who the audience is. However, the interviewees' experiences and ideas about the UK did not necessarily match the

profile or needs of TOE's target audience (i.e. teachers and student teachers with limited knowledge about development or colonialism). Therefore, our decision, as authors, was to consult indigenous participants in relation to how their voices were represented in the resource, but not involve them in the educational design of the resource, which required a significant knowledge of teacher education in the UK and in the international context. We also decided to emphasise the fact that TOE is not about indigenous people, but about how meaning is constructed in different contexts.

In terms of representation of knowledge, the decision to focus on equipping participants to participate in a debate around the construction of meaning and knowledge rather than transmitting content, was also seen as a problematic issue. From the perspective of some indigenous activists, for example, in order to counter negative dominant stereotypes associated with indigenous communities we had an obligation to balance them by projecting entirely positive images of indigenous cultures and knowledges. There was also some pressure to teach indigenous knowledges as content to be transmitted. From this perspective, by encouraging learners to question both mainstream and indigenous perspectives, we could undermine the struggles of those who were already vulnerable. An implication of that could be the accusation that, although this project is trying to address colonial readings that marginalise indigenous people, it reproduces colonial power relations by appropriating and using indigenous knowledges for other purposes rather than unconditional support.

Nevertheless, this position was challenged by a 'non-indigenous' perspective concerned with avoiding romanticisation of indigenous cultures in fear that it could further extend the disaffection of local people in relation to their British identity, especially children, if the methodology was transferred to the classroom. The argument was that we had to balance criticism with a positive image of being 'white' as well. This would imply two possible positions that as authors we did not feel comfortable with: (i) a position where 'we' (British people funding this project) allow 'them' (indigenous people who may be angry at what has happened in the past) to represent themselves as long as they are nice and do not challenge our white identity or affect our self-esteem; or (ii) the position that we should allow all perspectives to be heard and celebrate them together as 'everyone has a right to their opinion' and, as a result we 'agree to disagree and leave it at that' and do nothing to address the inequalities in power or in the distribution of resources. Our decision was to design the methodology around questioning assumptions, emphasising the diversity inherent in the mainstream, presenting sharp critiques from indigenous perspectives, but also problematising 'white' and indigenous homogeneity and essentialism. Therefore, within TOE, indigenous perspectives as represented by indigenous participants offer a radical alternative to mainstream Western thought, but are also open to critique.

We also did not involve non-indigenous members in all decisions related to the development of TOE as the design of the resource required a deep engagement with the theory and with the problematic nature of the process of representing indigenous knowledges in educational processes. This prompted the criticism that we were acting in a colonising way in relation to our 'non-indigenous' colleagues as well, denying them the oppor-

tunity for capacity building and keeping our knowledge of the theory and our own learning process to ourselves. As authors, we felt that if we were to raise capacity within the group, the project would have had to be constructed around 'capacity building for Northern partners' and required more time and resources.

This analysis of the tensions in the development process of TOE shows some of the ways that issues of theory, knowledge construction and representation can produce complex and controversial readings that may be difficult to negotiate once you start engaging with issues in more depth. This minefield located in the interface between development and culture is an aspect of development education that is often overlooked. In the last part of this paper, some of these lessons are applied to the overall context of development education and global learning in Europe.

Development education: professional capacity building for the 21st Century

The complexities and tensions in the design of TOE reflect some of the challenges of development education and global learning in the 21st Century. Envisioning the area in the future requires an exercise of imagining different present and future scenarios.

Nandy (2003) argues that ethical education pluralises the future by pluralising knowledge in the present. If development education and global learning are to become a power house of ideas, creativity and new thinking on how to create a world with fewer inequalities (Bourn, 2005), the importance of dissenting voices needs to be recognised.

In order to prepare educators to engage with development and culture, which are characterised by diversity, complexity, uncertainty, contingency and dissent, the professional capacity building of educators, ideally, would involve three inter-related areas: professional learning related to education; professional learning related to global and local processes, and professional learning related to knowledge construction.

Professional learning related to education (PLE) should be done in a way that prepares educators to respond to complex contexts and to think in ethical, critical and accountable ways. It should involve an awareness and critique of a range of theories and methodologies and focus on the design of strategies to allow learners to develop predispositions towards dialogue, learning from difference, and ethical, critical and accountable thinking. Implicit in this approach is a move away from campaigning and indoctrination towards preparing educators and learners to make their own informed decisions with others in responsive and responsible ways.

Professional learning related to global and local processes (PLG) should expose educators to different perspectives in terms of how globalisation works, how it affects different people and how it is negotiated in different contexts. It should involve a critical analysis of international development issues and social movements. It should pay particular attention to the development of an awareness of the histories of colonialism and its links to global processes, as well as an ethical imperative to bring to the fore dissenting and marginalised voices.

Professional learning related to knowledge construction (PLK) should focus on the connections between language, knowledge and power and the construction of meaning and representations (i.e. critical literacy). It should develop educators' awareness of how

different social/cultural groups interpret reality in different ways, emphasise the partial nature of these perspectives and prompt a critical examination of the implications of these differences in different contexts. This kind of learning should develop a self-reflexive attitude that would help educators situate their own perspective in social-historical contexts. It should also increase their capacity to relate to 'difference' in an ethical way, to include dissenting voices in the learning process and to negotiate imbalances of power relations in the communities where they operate.

In conclusion, to meet the challenges of the 21st century in terms of equipping learners to listen to one another and work together to create new possibilities for an equitable and sustainable future, development education will need to challenge its boundaries, become self-reflexive, diversify its constituency, raise its professional profile, operate inter-disciplinarily, focus on the interface between development and culture, articulate the connections between theories and practices and, in accountable ways, face the challenge of walking the minefields illustrated in this paper.

Dr Vanessa Andreotti is a senior lecturer at the School of Maori, Social and Cultural Studies at Canterbury University. She is also a research fellow at DERN (University of Ireland, Galway). Email: vanessa.andreotti@canterbury.ac.nz

Prof Lynn Mario de Souza is based at the University of Sao Paulo. He is an indigenous education consultant for UNESCO. Email: mdesouza@usp.br

Notes

1 TOE is hosted by the Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice, Global Education Derby and the University of Canterbury (NZ). Other partners include: the Centre for Development Education Research at the Institute of Education, University of Sao Paulo, University of London, Manchester Metropolitan University, Leicester University, National University of Ireland (Galway), DICE project and the University of Victoria in Wellington. TOE was partly funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), but the views represented in TOE do not necessarily represent DFID's position.

2 See, for example Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2000; Mignolo, 2000; Quijano, 1997; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1999; Young, 1990; Battiste, 2000; Deloria, 1995; Smith, 1999; Thaman, 2002.

3 The illustrations for each metaphor can be found at www.throughothereyes.org.uk/metaphors

4 Bhabha develops this notion in the concept of 'locus of enunciation', which is also an important concept in Mignolo's work.

5 The notion of hybridity and the idea of the 'third space' in Bhabha's work were the basis of this metaphor.

6 Spivak's notion of 'deconstruction' is the basis of this process.

7 This resonates with Spivak's idea that the 'rearrangement of desires' should be 'uncoersive'.

8 This metaphor draws from an interview with Wera Mirim in Santa Catarina in Brazil carried out in December 2006. Wera is from the Guarani-Pain indigenous community.

9 This metaphor is also grounded on Mignolo's and Bhabha's concept of locus of enunciation. The idea of the shoes came from Lisa Taylor's work in Canada.

10 Spivak's idea of 'epistemic violence' and Bhabha's notions of ambivalence and mimicry were the basis of this metaphor.

11 This notion is informed by the relational construction of identities in the work of Bhabha and ideas of 'unlearning privilege' in the work of Spivak.

12 This notion is informed by Bhabha, Mignolo and Spivak's ideas around examining the social construction of one's 'locus of enunciation' – or 'where one is speaking from'.

13 Bhabha's concept of 'locus of enunciation' is at the heart of the process described here.

14 Spivak's ideas around 'learning to work without guarantees' informs this component, which can also be linked to ideas of curiosity, risk taking and dialogue in Paulo Freire's work.

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Translating Theory into Practice and Walking Minefields: Lessons from the project 'Through Other Eyes'

Vanessa Andreotti
University of Canterbury (New Zealand)

Lynn Mario T M de Souza
University of Sao Paulo (Brazil)

Abstract

This paper reflects on the lessons learned in the design and development process of the project Through Other Eyes (TOE). It explores the justification and theoretical framework of TOE in the context of development education and global learning by outlining some of the challenges and tensions of translating postcolonial theory into pedagogical practice and of negotiating complex issues of language, representation and ownership in a context of North-South dialogue.

Keywords: *Indigenous knowledges; postcolonial theory, representation*

Introduction

In recent years, strategies and initiatives that aim to build global and development awareness have proliferated in the educational sector in the European context. Educators are encouraged to 'bring the world into their classrooms' by addressing global issues such as interdependence, diversity, human rights, peace, social justice, and international and sustainable development. However, research in this area indicates that educational approaches tend to address the agenda for international development in a manner that leaves assumptions unexamined and ignores how the agenda itself is re-interpreted in other contexts (Foubert, 1986; Pardíñaz-Solís, 2006; Andreotti, 2006; Biccum, 2005; Development Education Association, 2001; McCollum, 1996). Not addressing these different interpretations may result in the uncritical reinforcement of notions of the supremacy and universality of 'our' (Western) ways of seeing and knowing, which can undervalue other knowledge systems and reinforce unequal relations of dialogue and power.

This article offers a reflection on this issue through the lenses of the Through Other Eyes Project (TOE). TOE is an international initiative[1] that aims to support educators to develop a set of tools to reflect on their own knowledge systems and to engage with other knowledge systems in different ways, in their own learning and in their classrooms. TOE was designed to enable educators to develop an understanding of how language and systems of belief, values and representation affect the way people interpret the world, to identify how different groups understand issues related to development and their implications for the development agenda and to critically examine these interpretations

– both 'Western' and 'indigenous' – looking at origins and potential implications of assumptions to identify an ethics for improved dialogue, engagement, and mutual learning.

TOE focuses on indigenous knowledge systems as epistemologies (or ways of knowing) that offer different ontological choices (or choices related to the ways we see reality and being) to those of the so-called 'Western' mainstream cultures.

This article is divided into four parts. The first part explores the justification and theoretical framework of TOE in the context of development education and global learning. It starts by identifying the problem of culturalism and its origins, as outlined by indigenous and postcolonial writers. It offers an analysis of the implications of addressing culturalism from a perspective based on 'strategic essentialism' and perspectives that emphasise hybridity and reflexivity. The second section illustrates how this theoretical framework was translated into educational language and practices in the Through Other Eyes conceptual framework, methodology and activities. In the third part of this article, the authors examine some of the challenges and tensions of negotiating the development of TOE with different communities who were part of the advisory group of the project and the strategic decisions that have been made as a result of these conflicts. The fourth and concluding part of this article outlines some implications of the lessons learned in the TOE development process for the field of development education.

The problem of culturalism

Reiterating the argument of several postcolonial and indigenous writers[2] on the tendency in Western thought to project its values as universal values, the Canadian indigenous theorist Battiste (2004) defines culturalism as an academic and pedagogical posture inherited from colonialism based on the assumption that mainstream (i.e. 'Western', 'colonial', 'Eurocentric') culture and knowledges are the global and universal norm from which indigenous, local knowledges and cultures deviate. A culturalist perspective, according to Battiste, homogenises both Western and indigenous knowledges and defines indigenous cultures as deficient and lacking.

Other authors have described this posture in similar ways. Mignolo (2000) conceptualises this view as a projection of a local (European) epistemology as universal, unmarked and neutral, which resulted in the creation of myths of modernity and cultural supremacy. These myths, based on a seamless narrative of progress, dictate that the modern civilisation is the most developed culture and has an obligation to civilise, uplift, educate and develop the lesser (barbarian) cultures (Mignolo, 2000). Mignolo argues that 'modernity' [...], in the name of rationality, science and philosophy asserted its own privilege over other forms of rationality or over what, from the perspective of modern reason, was irrational' (*ibid*: 116). From this perspective, time acts as a principle that arbitrates and ranks not only what counts as knowledge, but also what it means to be human (Taylor, 2006).

Also challenging Eurocentric representations, Said (1978) argues that in defining others as lacking, inferior, ignorant, traditional and barbaric, those who colonised others have learned to think of themselves as superior, enlightened, modern and civilised – a posture he calls 'orientalism'. Hence, non-European traditions, cultures and ways of knowing

and organising are translated into the culturalist posture as inferior, less evolved, primitive, erroneous or eccentric 'culturally different' derivatives (Canagarajah, 2002; Liu, 1999; Taylor, 2006).

Spivak (1999) conceptualises the culturalist posture as a movement of subalternisation and normalisation of difference that she refers to as the 'epistemic violence' of colonialism. She argues that, apart from the mission to 'civilise others' and make them conform to universalist ideals, this violence also implies other assumptions about self and other that may lead to further discrimination and harm, such as the impulse to study, to analyse, to categorise, to record, to inscribe, to judge and to 'consume' other cultures; the projection of one's parameters of analysis as universal and objective; the desire that the other will conform to one's parameters and categorisations and the belief that if the other does not recognise one's parameters and categories, he/she has no parameters or categories of his/her own.

This epistemic violence of culturalist postures directly affects cultural difference: 'those who stubbornly insist on maintaining their own vision of 'progress' or 'reason' face the danger of being isolated, impoverished and discriminated against' (Canagarajah, 2002: 245). What Canagarajah describes is similar to the 'double bind' facing African philosophers according to Bernasconi: '[e]ither African philosophy is so similar to Western philosophy that it makes no distinctive contribution and effectively disappears; or it is so different that its credentials to be genuine philosophy will always be in doubt' (cited in Mignolo, 2002: 70).

Addressing culturalism

The most common reaction against culturalism is the interrogation of its inherent hierarchical binaries and the reassertion of cultural legitimacy and authenticity of repressed groups. This generally leads to a revitalisation of cultures and languages in order to collectively 'speak back' to mainstream power. Spivak (1999) calls this approach 'strategic essentialism'. Strategic essentialism is a position that 'forgets' cultural heterogeneity in the name of a political/identity cause. Spivak argues that this can be a useful and effective strategy in the political sphere for indigenous and minority communities in the struggle for the redistribution of resources. However, from Bhabha (1994), Spivak's and Battiste's perspectives the limitations of strategic essentialism lie in its ethnocentric stance, its denial of internal differences and its attempt to fix an essentialist and authentic version of a specific culture or identity. From their perspective, cultures are always inherently heterogeneous, conflictual, dynamic and processual. Thus, by fixing the characteristics of a stable and knowable identity/culture, strategic essentialism, denies internal hybridity and can reproduce some of the claims that are the basis of colonialism itself, such as the myths of traceable 'pure' origins.

In Bhaba's and Battiste's view, a more effective strategy against the culturalist posture is an awareness of the complexity and non-homogeneity of 'indigenous' and mainstream cultures and knowledges. Battiste calls for the need for education to reconceptualise the 'mainstream' as a 'changing and fluid space' open to dialogue and collaboration from non-mainstream knowledges and cultures with which it co-exists. In a similar way, Bhabha suggests a pedagogical strategy that destabilises the culturalist position by

emphasising hybridity, positionality and the relational construction of self and other in what he calls the 'third space'. For Bhabha, the third space is where claims of cultural hierarchy, power relations, identities and knowledges are re-negotiated. His project can be summarised as the construction of the 'possibility of cultural contestation [and] the capacity to change the foundation of knowledge' (Bhabha, 1990:310).

Spivak (1999) also defends this re-negotiation from within. She argues that people should engage in a persistent critique of culturalism and other discourses and representations as they inhabit them. This is why she promotes 'deconstructive' strategies for the critique of culturalism. For her, deconstruction 'points out that in constructing any kind of an argument, we must move from implied premises, that must necessarily obliterate or finesse certain possibilities that question the validity of these premises in an absolute justifiable way' (Spivak, 1999:104). She conceptualises education 'to come' in the humanities as an 'uncoersive rearrangement of desires' focusing on the development of reflexivity. The aim of this pedagogical project is to establish an 'ethical relation to difference' through 'unlearning privilege', 'learning to learn from below' and learning to work without guarantees.

Kapoor (2004) has summarised Spivak's pedagogical process as the creation of a predisposition to 'retrace the itinerary of our prejudices and learning habits (from racism, sexism and classism to academic elitism and ethnocentrism), stop thinking of ourselves as better or fitter and unlearn dominant systems of knowledge and representation' (*ibid*: 641). Beverley (1999) defines 'unlearning privilege' as 'working against the grain of our interests and prejudices by contesting the authority of the academy and knowledge centres at the same time that we continue to participate in them and to deploy that authority as teachers, researchers, administrators and theorists' (*ibid*: 31). Moore-Gilbert (1997) refers to unlearning as the 'imperative to reconsider positions that once seemed self-evident and normal' (*ibid*: 98). Kapoor (2004) asserts that unlearning means 'stopping oneself from always wanting to correct, teach, theorise, develop, colonise, appropriate, use, record, inscribe, enlighten' (*ibid*: 642). He quotes Alcoff's statement that 'the impetus to always be the speaker and speak in all situations must be seen for what it is: a desire for mastery and domination' (Alcoff, 1999:24 cited in Kapoor, 2004:642). This implies that, in representing the other 'over there', careful scrutiny is needed 'over here' (*ibid*).

Bhabha's, Battiste's and Spivak's propositions provided the theoretical framework for the design of the Through Other Eyes Project learning strategies. These hopefully enable the development of the analytical tools and ethical grounds necessary for learners to engage with global issues and perspectives addressing the complexity, uncertainty, and contingency of knowledge construction. In practice, compared to a liberal educational framework, these ideas offer an approach that attempts to go beyond culturalism, ethnocentrism, essentialism, reversed racism and orientalism.

Translating theory into practice: theoretical metaphors
In this section, the six metaphors employed in the language of TOE are presented to illustrate the connections between the theory described and the design of the pedagogical process 'in practice' as they address an audience of student teachers and teacher

educators in England. The links to the theories described in part one are made explicit in the text and in the footnotes[3].

The first metaphor applied in this project refers to the 'writing' of identities. TOE's approach to identity construction goes beyond culturalism by challenging essentialism and emphasising hybridity. Identity is conceptualised as the juxtaposition of one's perceptions and relationships in relation to the self, to others and to the world. In line with Bhabha's argument, TOE has adopted the notion that identities are constantly constructed and reconstructed in interactions that take place in the different social groups to which people belong. In other words, our identities are 'written' in our social contexts; what we know is marked by where we come from[4]. Concomitantly, we can also participate in this construction and reconstruction by re-writing things ourselves. We can 'rebel' and choose to be something different, and create perceptions and relationships that are different from our social groups[5]. In addition, we participate in the construction and reconstruction of the identities of others when we relate to and communicate with them, as illustrated in figure 1.

As it is often difficult to notice or examine the 'hands' that are 'writing' us, TOE was designed so that learners can develop tools to enable them to examine these 'hands' more easily[6] and 'write' their own perceptions and relationships confidently; to think more independently, and examine the effects their 'writing' has on other people and in the world. This enables learners to decide for themselves whether or not they should change their 'writing'[7].

The second metaphor used in the project refers to the construction of difference. The colonial notion that difference is defined as deficiency is based on assumptions of individuality grounded in a notion of a self-sufficient individual who is 'the same' as other individuals in his/her community and therefore dispensable. In TOE, we use the metaphor of a hand[8] to re-deploy a notion of difference based on the idea of different, interdependent individuals who, like fingers of a hand, are insufficient in themselves but indispensable in their communities where they offer a unique contribution. This metaphor aims to open the possibility for learners to look at difference as a source of learning and not as a threat, and to appreciate people for their distinctiveness.

The third metaphor refers to positionality and the impossibility of putting ourselves in the shoes of others while we still have our own shoes on. This metaphor suggests that we cannot really take our shoes off, as we cannot simply forget all of our own experience, language and concepts, and we lack other people's experience, language and concepts to see 'exactly' what they see. It is really important that we understand that different people will have different shoes and will be coming from different experiences, languages and concepts[9]. Looking at different people's shoes (even though we cannot walk in them barefoot) reminds us that cultures are context-bound as all shoes are 'coming from' somewhere. By engaging with different shoes, despite the difficulties of putting them on, we might understand better where our own shoes might be coming from and where they might be leading to in order to check if we are happy with the ways and paths we walk.

The fourth metaphor refers to four possible lenses to frame otherness that reinforce unequal relations of power: of the missionary, the teacher, the tourist and the anthropologist. These are related to Spivak's ideas of the colonial heritage to frame otherness in ways that 'subalternise' difference. The lens of the missionary frames engagement with otherness or difference around the motif of 'salvation' and increased privilege for the 'saviour'. The teacher frames engagement with otherness around the motif of 'enlightenment' and increased privilege for the holder of knowledge. The tourist frames engagement with difference around the motif of 'consumption' or 'entertainment' and finally, the lens of the anthropologist' frames engagement with difference around the motif of 'preservation'. The first two lenses favour intervention for 'positive' change defined by those who are intervening. The third and fourth lenses favour 'preservation' defined by those who observe. These lenses tend to block possibilities for equal grounds for meaningful dialogue where the self is open to challenge and be challenged by difference.

The fifth metaphor is that of a scale of worth. It refers to past and present imbalances in power relations in the distribution of resources and in the worth attributed to knowledges, cultures and individuals. It invites learners to think about the epistemic violences[10] inherited from colonialism and its implications in modern competitive societies. It also highlights the complex negotiation of power on the part of indigenous groups and raises the question of what can be learned from different ways of knowing.

The sixth metaphor refers to the partiality of perspectives, the importance of situatedness and the context dependency of language. It draws from poststructuralist theory that informs some of the postcolonial theoretical strands described in the first part of this article, and the Incan trilogy of perspectives of the condor, the serpent and the jaguar. This metaphor invites learners to see a village through the eyes of each of these three animal 'seers', to explore the limitations and partiality of each way of seeing and to imagine a conversation where these perspectives are brought together. What would happen if one or more of these players decided to claim they could see the whole picture? What languages would be used to communicate each perspective? Would they be able to understand each other? Would they be able to arrive at a consensus? Would their own perspectives change after this conversation? Would they have a better idea of the 'whole picture' through this conversation? This questioning process reflects the pedagogical process that TOE aims to facilitate.

Conceptual Framework

Spivak's work provided the insight for the structure of TOE's conceptual framework of learning to unlearn, learning to listen, learning to learn and learning to reach out. Each idea of learning has a specific function within TOE's methodology, as described below.

Learning to unlearn – we learn to perceive that what we consider 'good and ideal' is *only one* perspective related to where we come from socially, historically and culturally. It also involves perceiving that we carry a 'cultural baggage' filled with ideas and concepts produced in our contexts that affects who we are and what we see, and that although we are different from others in our own contexts, we share much in common with them. Learning to unlearn is about making connections between social-historical processes and encounters that have shaped our contexts, and cultures, and the construction of our knowledges and identities. It is also about becoming aware that all social groups contain internal differences and conflicts, and that culture is a dynamic and conflictual production of meaning in a specific context[11].

Learning to listen – we learn to recognise the effects and limits of our perspective, and to be receptive to new understandings of the world. It involves learning to perceive how our cultural baggage, the ideas we learn from our social groups, affects our ability to engage with difference. Hence, learning to listen is about learning to keep our perceptions constantly under scrutiny, tracing the origins and implications of our assumptions, in order to open up to different possibilities of understanding and becoming aware that interpretations of what we hear or see might say more about us than about what is actually being said or shown. This process also involves understanding how identities are constructed in interaction between self and other, not only in the communities to which we belong, but also between these communities and others[12].

Learning to learn – we learn to receive new perspectives, to re-arrange and expand our own and to deepen our understanding, going into the uncomfortable space of 'what we do not know we do not know'. It involves creating different possibilities of understanding, trying to see through other eyes by transforming our own and avoiding the tendency to want to turn the other into the self or the self into the other. Therefore, learning to learn is about learning to feel comfortable about crossing the boundaries of the comfort zone within ourselves and engaging with new concepts to rearrange our cultural baggage and renegotiate our understandings, relationships and desires[13].

Learning to reach out – we learn to apply learning itself to our own contexts and in our relationships with others, continuing to reflect on and explore the unknown: new possible ways of being, thinking, doing, knowing and relating. It involves understanding that one needs to be open to the unpredictable outcomes of mutual uncoersive learning and perceiving that in making contact with others, one exposes oneself and exposes others to difference and newness, and this often results in mutual teaching and learning, although this learning may be different for each party involved. Learning to reach out is about learning to engage, to learn and to teach with respect and accountability in the complex and uncomfortable relational 'third' space where identities, power and ideas are negotiated. This process requires the understanding that conflict is a productive component of learning and that the process itself is cyclical: once one has learned to

reach out in one context, one is ready to start a new cycle of unlearning, listening, learning and reaching out again at another level[14].

Walking minefields

This section addresses some of the challenges in the design and development of TOE in terms of two aspects. First, we explore the challenges in translating TOE into a language accessible to a 'non-academic' audience whilst trying to keep the intellectual integrity and theoretical and pedagogical consistency of the project. Next, we discuss some of the challenges of negotiating issues of representation and ownership.

TOE's learning programme was based on a baseline enquiry which involved individuals in different indigenous communities in Peru, Zambia, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand. TOE had an advisory board consisting of educators, academics and activists from different areas and disciplines with a briefing to work as 'critical friends' of the project. TOE also invited external reviewers to pilot activities and submit critiques at the last stage of development. In many occasions internal differences were enacted in the process through the representations of North versus South, indigenous versus non-indigenous and practitioner versus academic identities. Therefore, we have kept these distinctions in our analysis when we felt they were significant.

As authors, we negotiated the complexities of the different relationships, fields and knowledge domains within which we and our colleagues were operating. We acknowledge our gratitude to participating individuals and communities for sharing their knowledge and allowing their perspectives to be included in the resource.

Theory in versus of practice

The first problematic issue arising in relation to theory and practice was related to language. Postcolonial theory is written in a specific academic language which is particular to a specific discipline and therefore, not easily accessible to teachers and student teachers who have their own specific language. However, in the process of negotiating the language used in TOE, we came across conflicting perspectives on the nature of language itself. One expressed the need for print resources to be written in plain English as the language of theory was unnecessarily complicated and authors should aim to express ideas in ordinary language accessible to everyone. A second perspective was that plain English was a problematic concept in itself as different speech communities will have their own version of what counts as plain; therefore, the project should focus on speaking teacher language. From yet a third perspective, teacher language was regarded as not well equipped to name or deal with the new analytical tools and levels of complexity related to debates around identity, power, and culture presented in TOE; therefore, the project itself should aim to support teacher acquisition of new language.

The power struggle in this conversation about language was also framed in relation to the worth attributed to practitioner and academic knowledge in different contexts. Academic knowledge and academic language were sometimes perceived as elitist, abstract, excluding, and separate from practice, whereas the practice domain was perceived as transparent, straightforward, and procedural. The response to this perception was that the idea that 'practice is separate from theory' was founded on a technicist view

of education which makes participants blind to the theoretical foundations of their practice. On the other hand, for us as authors it was important to translate the theory in a way that would not alienate learners or practitioners. Part of the compromise was built around an emphasis on visual literacy, the use of images and graphic organisers in metaphors to convey the theory and in the presentation of the information in the print resource.

The second issue, related to the translation of theory into practice, was that of contrasting perspectives on the use of binaries or dichotomies in the resources. The first perspective, generally coming from Southern project partners, focused on power relations and claimed that the project had the moral obligation to revert the binaries created by those who colonised others in order to present a true and valued representation of those who have historically been marginalised. The second perspective, generally coming from Northern project partners, focused on the acknowledgement of complexity and claimed that the project should avoid binaries altogether in order to emphasise heterogeneity and individual differences.

In theoretical terms, the problem with the first perspective is that it essentialises indigenous communities and the coloniser category. The problem with the second perspective is that, by reducing heterogeneity to the level of individual differences, it denies the inherently *social* construction of identities and relationships and the power dynamics that permeate relationships between groups. If taken literally, this perspective can dismiss any claim to collective oppression on the grounds that every colonisation or oppression happened or happens in a different way, therefore comparisons are impossible.

In pedagogical terms, by reverting cultural hierarchies and focusing on substituting negative stereotypes of marginalised peoples for positive stereotypes, the first perspective fails to acknowledge the relational construction of identities and to challenge cultural supremacy on both sides. The pedagogical implications of the second perspective point to the lack of analysis of the connection between power, knowledge and distribution of resources, labour, and value. A potential implication of that is that this perspective may place colonialism securely in the past, conveniently forgetting the existing inequalities of worth attributed to individuals and knowledges coming from socially and historically constructed binaries of North and South; East and West; primitive and civilised; developed and underdeveloped; first and third worlds; modern and traditional; etc. that are *still* part of mainstream discourses in both 'North' and 'South'.

Our theoretical and pedagogical decision was to acknowledge complexity and power relations, and focus the design of the learning process on deconstruction itself. In this sense, the pedagogical emphasis was on teaching learners to apply deconstruction by modelling the questions in the learning tasks. As deconstruction is a process that relies on binaries to deconstruct binaries, we had to expose learners to binaries in order to teach deconstruction. If the learning tasks are successful, learners will have acquired the skills to engage critically with the resource itself and further deconstruct its strategic binaries. On the other hand, in order to acknowledge the epistemic violence of

colonialism we designed the resources in a way that would allow indigenous participants to present a powerful critique to mainstream perceptions of their knowledges, communities and identities as well.

Issues of representation

The first point of contention in relation to representation was related to the word 'indigenous'. From the perspective of the people we interviewed, being indigenous was linked to having been violently colonised; to experiencing inequality in terms of the distribution of power and resources (especially issues of land rights); and, to a living struggle against racism and for the survival of their specific language and way of seeing. However, the term indigenous is constructed differently in different contexts. In the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UDRIP), the term is implicitly conceptualised around historic colonial injustices:

> ...indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of, inter alia, their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests. (UDRIP 2007:1)

On the other hand, the Cambridge dictionary online offers only one definition of 'indigenous': 'naturally existing in a place or country rather than arriving from another place' (Cambridge Dictionary Online, 2008). From this perspective, as everyone is coming from somewhere, everyone is indigenous. Although this definition is valid, in the context of indigenous struggles, it tends to be deployed to diffuse discussions of inequality in the distribution of power and resources. This prompted some contentious debates in the development group. In our role as project coordinators and authors of the course, our strategic decision was to privilege the first definition of being indigenous, but to emphasise the *debate* on the construction of meaning.

In terms of representation, although the project was not targeted at an indigenous audience, from the perspective of indigenous activists it should still produce direct benefits to them and allow for their deep involvement in the development process so that they could decide how to best represent themselves in the resources. The imminent criticism, coming from an understanding of TOE as a project *about* indigenous peoples, was that by not allowing indigenous people to be actively involved in all decisions about the project we could be seen as carrying out the design process in a colonising way by 'appropriating' indigenous peoples' knowledges and preventing them from having access to capacity building and collective ownership over something that relates to their communities. The problem we faced was that representation, in the context of local indigenous struggles, tends to 'speak truth to power' (generally to the local government) in an attempt to redress inequalities in power and distribution of resources, i.e. strategic essentialism.

The way indigenous groups may choose to use strategic essentialism to represent themselves to the government may be justifiable and successful in that context, but not so in an educational context in a different country. In order to represent oneself to an audience in a pedagogical process, one has to have an idea of who the audience is. However, the interviewees' experiences and ideas about the UK did not necessarily match the

profile or needs of TOE's target audience (i.e. teachers and student teachers with limited knowledge about development or colonialism). Therefore, our decision, as authors, was to consult indigenous participants in relation to how their voices were represented in the resource, but not involve them in the educational design of the resource, which required a significant knowledge of teacher education in the UK and in the international context. We also decided to emphasise the fact that TOE is not about indigenous people, but about how meaning is constructed in different contexts.

In terms of representation of knowledge, the decision to focus on equipping participants to participate in a debate around the construction of meaning and knowledge rather than transmitting content, was also seen as a problematic issue. From the perspective of some indigenous activists, for example, in order to counter negative dominant stereotypes associated with indigenous communities we had an obligation to balance them by projecting entirely positive images of indigenous cultures and knowledges. There was also some pressure to teach indigenous knowledges as content to be transmitted. From this perspective, by encouraging learners to question both mainstream and indigenous perspectives, we could undermine the struggles of those who were already vulnerable. An implication of that could be the accusation that, although this project is trying to address colonial readings that marginalise indigenous people, it reproduces colonial power relations by appropriating and using indigenous knowledges for other purposes rather than unconditional support.

Nevertheless, this position was challenged by a 'non-indigenous' perspective concerned with avoiding romanticisation of indigenous cultures in fear that it could further extend the disaffection of local people in relation to their British identity, especially children, if the methodology was transferred to the classroom. The argument was that we had to balance criticism with a positive image of being 'white' as well. This would imply two possible positions that as authors we did not feel comfortable with: (i) a position where 'we' (British people funding this project) allow 'them' (indigenous people who may be angry at what has happened in the past) to represent themselves as long as they are nice and do not challenge our white identity or affect our self-esteem; or (ii) the position that we should allow all perspectives to be heard and celebrate them together as 'everyone has a right to their opinion' and, as a result we 'agree to disagree and leave it at that' and do nothing to address the inequalities in power or in the distribution of resources. Our decision was to design the methodology around questioning assumptions, emphasising the diversity inherent in the mainstream, presenting sharp critiques from indigenous perspectives, but also problematising 'white' and indigenous homogeneity and essentialism. Therefore, within TOE, indigenous perspectives as represented by indigenous participants offer a radical alternative to mainstream Western thought, but are also open to critique.

We also did not involve non-indigenous members in all decisions related to the development of TOE as the design of the resource required a deep engagement with the theory and with the problematic nature of the process of representing indigenous knowledges in educational processes. This prompted the criticism that we were acting in a colonising way in relation to our 'non-indigenous' colleagues as well, denying them the oppor-

tunity for capacity building and keeping our knowledge of the theory and our own learning process to ourselves. As authors, we felt that if we were to raise capacity within the group, the project would have had to be constructed around 'capacity building for Northern partners' and required more time and resources.

This analysis of the tensions in the development process of TOE shows some of the ways that issues of theory, knowledge construction and representation can produce complex and controversial readings that may be difficult to negotiate once you start engaging with issues in more depth. This minefield located in the interface between development and culture is an aspect of development education that is often overlooked. In the last part of this paper, some of these lessons are applied to the overall context of development education and global learning in Europe.

Development education: professional capacity building for the 21st Century

The complexities and tensions in the design of TOE reflect some of the challenges of development education and global learning in the 21st Century. Envisioning the area in the future requires an exercise of imagining different present and future scenarios.

Nandy (2003) argues that ethical education pluralises the future by pluralising knowledge in the present. If development education and global learning are to become a power house of ideas, creativity and new thinking on how to create a world with fewer inequalities (Bourn, 2005), the importance of dissenting voices needs to be recognised.

In order to prepare educators to engage with development and culture, which are characterised by diversity, complexity, uncertainty, contingency and dissent, the professional capacity building of educators, ideally, would involve three inter-related areas: professional learning related to education; professional learning related to global and local processes, and professional learning related to knowledge construction.

Professional learning related to education (PLE) should be done in a way that prepares educators to respond to complex contexts and to think in ethical, critical and accountable ways. It should involve an awareness and critique of a range of theories and methodologies and focus on the design of strategies to allow learners to develop predispositions towards dialogue, learning from difference, and ethical, critical and accountable thinking. Implicit in this approach is a move away from campaigning and indoctrination towards preparing educators and learners to make their own informed decisions with others in responsive and responsible ways.

Professional learning related to global and local processes (PLG) should expose educators to different perspectives in terms of how globalisation works, how it affects different people and how it is negotiated in different contexts. It should involve a critical analysis of international development issues and social movements. It should pay particular attention to the development of an awareness of the histories of colonialism and its links to global processes, as well as an ethical imperative to bring to the fore dissenting and marginalised voices.

Professional learning related to knowledge construction (PLK) should focus on the connections between language, knowledge and power and the construction of meaning and representations (i.e. critical literacy). It should develop educators' awareness of how

different social/cultural groups interpret reality in different ways, emphasise the partial nature of these perspectives and prompt a critical examination of the implications of these differences in different contexts. This kind of learning should develop a self-reflexive attitude that would help educators situate their own perspective in social-historical contexts. It should also increase their capacity to relate to 'difference' in an ethical way, to include dissenting voices in the learning process and to negotiate imbalances of power relations in the communities where they operate.

In conclusion, to meet the challenges of the 21st century in terms of equipping learners to listen to one another and work together to create new possibilities for an equitable and sustainable future, development education will need to challenge its boundaries, become self-reflexive, diversify its constituency, raise its professional profile, operate inter-disciplinarily, focus on the interface between development and culture, articulate the connections between theories and practices and, in accountable ways, face the challenge of walking the minefields illustrated in this paper.

Dr Vanessa Andreotti is a senior lecturer at the School of Maori, Social and Cultural Studies at Canterbury University. She is also a research fellow at DERN (University of Ireland, Galway). Email: vanessa.andreotti@canterbury.ac.nz

Prof Lynn Mario de Souza is based at the University of Sao Paulo. He is an indigenous education consultant for UNESCO. Email: mdesouza@usp.br

Notes

1 TOE is hosted by the Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice, Global Education Derby and the University of Canterbury (NZ). Other partners include: the Centre for Development Education Research at the Institute of Education, University of Sao Paulo, University of London, Manchester Metropolitan University, Leicester University, National University of Ireland (Galway), DICE project and the University of Victoria in Wellington. TOE was partly funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), but the views represented in TOE do not necessarily represent DFID's position.

2 See, for example Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2000; Mignolo, 2000; Quijano, 1997; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1999; Young, 1990; Battiste, 2000; Deloria, 1995; Smith, 1999; Thaman, 2002.

3 The illustrations for each metaphor can be found at www.throughothereyes.org.uk/metaphors

4 Bhabha develops this notion in the concept of 'locus of enunciation', which is also an important concept in Mignolo's work.

5 The notion of hybridity and the idea of the 'third space' in Bhabha's work were the basis of this metaphor.

6 Spivak's notion of 'deconstruction' is the basis of this process.

7 This resonates with Spivak's idea that the 'rearrangement of desires' should be 'uncoersive'.

8 This metaphor draws from an interview with Wera Mirim in Santa Catarina in Brazil carried out in December 2006. Wera is from the Guarani-Pain indigenous community.

9 This metaphor is also grounded on Mignolo's and Bhabha's concept of locus of enunciation. The idea of the shoes came from Lisa Taylor's work in Canada.

10 Spivak's idea of 'epistemic violence' and Bhabha's notions of ambivalence and mimicry were the basis of this metaphor.

11 This notion is informed by the relational construction of identities in the work of Bhabha and ideas of 'unlearning privilege' in the work of Spivak.

12 This notion is informed by Bhabha, Mignolo and Spivak's ideas around examining the social construction of one's 'locus of enunciation' – or 'where one is speaking from'.

13 Bhabha's concept of 'locus of enunciation' is at the heart of the process described here.

14 Spivak's ideas around 'learning to work without guarantees' informs this component, which can also be linked to ideas of curiosity, risk taking and dialogue in Paulo Freire's work.

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