

CHANGE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS: FROM LITERATURE TO BASIC COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

In this paper I shall point out the gradual but far-reaching changes taking place in the teaching of English, specifically at Vista University. The major change is from the teaching of literature to basic language communication skills, a change predominantly determined by transformations in the education system (since political transformation) and the challenges posed by international higher education trends and globalisation. As a result of such forces which also work against each other in a way, particularly in a

country trying to establish its own identity, the type of English that is in demand has had to be drastically changed to meet basic survival and employment needs as well as counteract falling student enrolments. English Studies is forced to change accordingly but, at the same time, loses much of a broad, rich discipline. Besides discussing the changes and results thereof my task is also to attempt to spell out in the context of the university and a country seeking to redefine itself after more than three hundred years of imagined and imposed identity what they finally indicate for education in general.

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The dominant narrative force in the world order today is change - namely, and for the purpose of this paper, it is change brought on by globalisation and what Gee and Lankshear describe as “fast capitalism” (1995). In this time the marketplace is god; learning in the hands of this god becomes a commercial, job placement commodity; education centres become providers; learners become customers and clients who require processing. Even in a post-apartheid country striving to redefine itself and establish a substantive international presence imperatives of the economy and the “bottom line”, more than anything else, are driving the process that inevitably affects the educational environment.

To illustrate, as a result of economic forces the humanities are being squeezed almost out of existence by mainly business training that in name and content holds out the promise of immediate and lucrative employment. In the grip of corporatist neo-conservative ideologies where economic rationalism inevitably links competition to prosperity teachers of English have had to learn to bite the bullet of market demands if they hope to have any presence, let alone influence at all. As Saul puts it, in the thrall of the market and his archangel technology ...trade is the market places’ miraculous cure for all that ails us. And globalisation is the eden or paradise into which the just shall be welcomed on Judgement Day (1997, 19-20).

In the Age of the Market (and

Technology) the assumption as well is that training and learning, together with once exclusive apartheid privileges, can now be easily attained by following step-by-step imperatives. But the almost obsessive focus on acquiring discrete and measureable skills scarcely leaves any room for learners to become other than performing machines. More seriously, under the influence of such an economic rationalist ideology in education the literate individual becomes other than the self to be inferred from the new constitution. In fact training and learning albeit with a permutation to a more equitable level (in racial terms given apartheid history) is almost like a perverse twist (though purportedly reformist) of pre-1994 social engineering.

In the face of the present economic slump, high rates of unemployment and past legacies the market-based educational panacea is in a way understandable. At the same time, however, the measureable production of “human capital”...skilled in new technologies and adapted to a flexible, post-Fordist economy with literacy are defined in terms of...occupationally valuable competencies is in urgent need of unpacking if we are to take to heart the constitutional vision of the South African human condition (Green et al, 1997:21). We need, for example, to be mindful that literacy in a country with a high basic illiteracy rate is being redefined as the individual learner is transformed into the “economic subject”; that what is expected of the economy and the

workplace is instrumental in shaping the new literacy; that what ultimately literacy becomes will have been determined by such socio-economic shifts and changes.

Gowen (1992), Brown (1994), O'Connor (1994) and Hull (1997) have already pointed to the minimising of literacy to serve narrow workplace interests. Empowerment envisioned in more liberal terms in the post-apartheid constitution is similarly curtailed to the circumscription required for efficiency and productivity. What is being silently eroded is the conception and practice of "liberal" (in the sense of being tolerant, plural and moderate) education and in particular, for the intentions of this paper, literature, the affective domain all for the sake of clear, measureable instrumental outcomes or applications. As teachers of English struggle to fit into the economy of the marketplace social and political considerations which were fought over for so long in reformulations of reading lists are increasingly obscured by the economic and technological and, despite numerous and repeated assurances to the contrary, by post-1994 constituted political agencies.

The contradictions and tensions can be explained by what Ruqaiya Hasan mentioned in her keynote address: Globalization, Literacy and Ideology at the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg) on 10 July 2002. While we allow for the elasticity of words she said that a "good feel" word, in this case "liberal" is used to make the "bad feel" word or idea look better. Our

new constitution, from this perspective and dressed up in liberal garb makes public rhetoric more amenable to consensus and widespread assent. This is necessary in matters of governance because the capitalistic mole burrows everywhere in globalized trade; and contracting out when the very basics of life are involved is disallowed.

While we as a polity are still grappling with political transformation the economy, globalisation and responsibilities to corporation shareholders if not directors and their bookkeeping intimates, the accountants, are succeeding in reformulating personal, working and political relationships into economic constructs. As a result of such forces often crashing into one another and in the process shattering the quest for a new identity, the type of English now in demand has had to be drastically changed to meet both basic survival and employment needs and student curriculum preferences.

My task in this paper is to critically review the two waves of radical change that have taken place in English teaching in general and at Vista University in particular since I became a tertiary educator in the 1980s. The review is two-dimensional: first, it will take its shape from the perspectives of the teaching, ideological and political backgrounds and intentions and student reactions; second, it will attempt to place in the context of both the university and country seeking to redefine itself after more than three hundred years of

imagined and imposed identity what is in the process of being lost by giving in wholly to market demands.

While it is imperative for basic survival in the university to recognise and respond to the need for change and development it ought not be entirely at the expense of rejecting what has so arduously been won. The social and political considerations gained in consequence of the first wave of change that was referred to above, the non-canon extensions to English studies and expansion of the notion of “liberal” education, has a vital role still to play in the realisation of economic competence, the national priority of late, which is contingent equally upon the workplace and by the way work is conceived and understood.

Before reviewing the first wave of canonical change it must first be pointed out that good intentions are not enough nor should they be taken at face value. To explain, at Vista University in the early 1990s the English reading lists were thoroughly reviewed in line with volumes of literary theorizing filtering into the international academic mainstream and the political changes taking place in the country. The change in what should be read at the tertiary level was not always welcomed country-wide. Some saw it as a crisis, the onslaught of anti-intellectualism and not the overdue reconstituting and renewal of a discipline by the inclusion of the once marginalised into a largely imposed, exclusive Eurocentric field. The literary

theorists who inspired the changes had, however grudgingly, to be acknowledged seeing that among other hitherto overlooked insights they convincingly showed that canons do not come into being in isolation but are deeply embedded in framing interacting complexities of ideologies and politics.

The readings lists at Vista were as a result of such exposures revised to reflect Africa and examine stereotypical ideas about identity, reality and meaning in works from national writers such as Mhlope, Head, Fugard, Modisane, Mtwa, Coetzee, Serote, Plomer, other African writers such as Ngugi, Dangarembga, Marechera, Ousman, Ba, Aidoo, Afro-Americans such as Morrison, South-Americans such as Marquez and Dorfman and residual canonical stalwarts such as Shakespeare, Conrad, Forster, Wordsworth, Eliot, Yeats and the modernist avant-garde Beckett.

The aim was to show how texts and reading models promote or challenge the taken-for-granted, the valued and naturalised. With feminist, African, Afro-American and post-colonial perspectives students were expected to emerge with a greater understanding of the complexities and ramifications of reading and understanding. But in a study in 1997 I discovered that this was barely happening when students were tested after the course had been taught. As a lecturer I had expected as a result of the new reading lists a better informed understanding of the lived apartheid experience; I also expected that students

would be able to see how race had been used together with essentialist binaric thinking to validate and justify racism. It soon became clear however from my discussions with students that nothing much had changed in their ideas about race, identity, reality and meaning-making. To the students Africa still represented darkness, savagery, violence and the primitive in contrast to Europe which signified civilisation, enlightenment, progress and order (see Sarinjeive, 1998).

Besides pointing to a deeply ingrained habit of mind (perhaps reinforced for the most part by unchanging post-1994 township living conditions) the failure to develop in the students more acute literary sensibilities highlighted far deeper problems, connected with the difficulties of reading in a second, often third, language English. The discovery was borne out in responses to examination questions where students struggled with concepts such as “canonicity”, “marginality” and “universality”. They generally responded in writing exercises by using clusters of key terms, jargon and rhetorical fragments that had been memorised and woven into some kind of answer to the questions posed. With such basic language problems the reading lists and alternative reading methods were evidently far too ambitious, a conclusion that with hindsight raises, in turn, questions about course designers, their habits of mind and desire to keep up with mainstream and international trends, and as it happened in the face of actual

student capabilities and prior needs.

Given general university practices and expectations the situation is not unique to Vista as Samuels pointed out in 1995 at the University of Durban-Westville and Prinsloo at the University of Natal in 1998. Besides the reading ability influences such as the mother tongue and other ghetto factors intertwined more and more in recent years with intellectual-consumerism are also at play. Jeanne Prinsloo points out in her study factors such as the reluctance to read and take responsibility for personal learning:

Many of these students looked to me to supply them with meanings of basic words and concepts that they could have investigated. If they found a reading difficult it was simply rejected. Frequently, the intended focus of a session would be abandoned because the majority of the learners lacked basic understanding of the content and prior concepts upon which further conceptual development depended (1998:142).

To get beyond the surface level, grasp concepts, understand analogies used or learn new reading strategies also require more time than is available at the tertiary level. Nor is there enough time at university to teach concepts repeatedly. Moreover in Prinsloo’s experience, which is similar to the Vista experience, the reduction of the course, in topics and reading texts did not necessarily result in a higher pass rate or more first class

passes. In fact most of the students who pass generally do so by just about making a pass mark.

Prinsloo's students at the University of Natal and students at Vista struggle to see beyond the surface of the text. Critical reading rests on unpacking the reading process and questioning textual authority which as the results demonstrate elude most of the students at Vista. Prinsloo goes further in her study to get to the roots of the problem. For her the problem originates in the transmission mode of teaching in contrast to liberal approaches of cultural heritage and personal growth models of textual practice, dichotomous approaches that coincided with differentiated apartheid structures of education (Prinsloo 1998: 143). For students unused to perceiving that teaching and learning can be ideologically loaded texts were not considered surface on which to work. Rather, rote learning and recall of quotations were validated (Prinsloo 1998: 143-144).

The irony is that post-1994 global economic, alongside local political imperatives, are driving the teaching of English full circle back to the selfsame apartheid impasse, and perhaps its continuation into perpetuity in view of the unpreparedness and attitudes of students together with demands for cut-and-dried rapid responses to literacy problems. What is required to fill gaps created by the past, undo the learning and habits of decades of apartheid, ensure critical literacy to probe the ideological

baggage of educational and other practices and keep up with the demands of the nanosecond-changing world of the markets are resources and measures which there never seem to be enough of.

As described in the Vista and University of Natal teaching experiences however, that tall order is brought down to size by students and their capabilities. It is a hard lesson to learn for both idealistic lecturers and designers of courses; but it is also salutary in bringing down-to-earth the English teaching enterprise in this part of the world at any rate. At the same time in a study carried out a few years ago at the Sebokeng campus of Vista I found that students also wanted besides the ability to speak English, to read and write well, think, analyse concepts and solve problems (Sarinjeive, 1998). What they were articulating by expressing such needs was that the ability to read, write and speak is inherent to thought processes required for understanding, analysing and communicating all types of subject matter. As a fundamental life and professional skill it is vital even in this Age of the Market for deep and wide rather than surface and narrow intellectual skills to be able to explain, convey new and rapidly changing information and condense materials for easy absorption.

Teachers have to deal with students' English and other difficulties and also provide for higher communication skills, that is, critical reading, decoding, interpreting and writing in the face of

quick-fix purpose-focussed needs and demands. From teaching experience it has been found that advanced literacy skills are best taught through and across various individual disciplines which are firmly grounded in reading, writing and analysis- in short, in the disciplines of the human and social sciences. In the teaching of literature, for instance, we have as described above gone further by changing and examining the changes in methods, practices and techniques.

But modules designed for the attaining of such skills are rejected by 80% of the students judging by the 2002 Vista registration records; the 80% prefer the likes of a fairly new module ENG5009: Reading and Writing Skills for Business English, one of eight covering basic English Communication and Business English. From colleagues from UCT, Rhodes and University of Pretoria I learnt however that they have healthy 2002 enrolments for literature courses; moreover, the English Department at the University of Pretoria focusses exclusively on literature. This may be connected to students returning to teaching qualifications as the UCT colleague explained but not always with the intention to teach in South Africa if advertisements in local newspapers from UK teacher recruiting agencies are anything to go by. Far more seriously it suggests another possibility constituting a further permutation of differentiation and divisiveness to add to burdens of the past that we are trying to rise above. To explain, UCT, Rhodes and the University of Pretoria are to begin with

far more costly and rigorous about admission requirements in comparison to Vista. Curriculum choices exacerbate differences further as students will learn to their cost as their lives unfold outside university walls. The Vista student who chooses ENG5009 may simultaneously, if that is the only English module taken, be choosing a circumscribed life because of the skills that will be taken into the national employment market. The module for nine credits and spread over six weeks of tuition, though managerially orientated, meets vital life and professional language needs peripherally by focussing on the workings of groups in business, how to identify and manage conflict situations, conduct meetings, compose notices, agendas, minutes, reports, presentations and how to manage time and basic language rules.

Quite simply, language in keeping with student demands is reduced from being an object of attention in its own right to an instrument, just a medium for exchanging information. It is blandly treated as unproblematic, as are those participating in language exchanges. It is also understood as reflective of reality and scientifically exact and objective, assumptions which in the last three decades have been challenged in literary studies.

Language in literary studies is shown to be not a transparent window on the world. Nor is it accepted that language reflects the world innocently and neutrally. Rather language constitutes the very terms of the reflected world since it

is the framework that conditions how we see the world. In the study of literature we spend most of our time reminding ourselves of our active involvement in the way we see and translate the world. Texts are treated as representations of reality and not reality itself. Similarly language is the way we know the world and not the world itself.

More importantly, particularly in our part of the world and in our time, what is taught in literary studies is that language is able to control and be controlled since it both determines and enables by mediating a contest that continues unabated. In critical literacy the focus is on the contest to show that any exchange of language is not between equals. Students are made aware of the contest in the written word, the invitation to share a point of view, rhetorical coercion and persuasion as well as the way language is couched in a manner virtually impossible to refuse, a point driven home by Edward Said at the Saamtrek: Values, Education and Democracy Conference in February 2001 in Cape Town. He pleads particularly in a post-apartheid South Africa now governed by a former liberation movement for the independent, enquiring critical reader because of the lazy rhetoric, automatic language and distorted ideological discourses that have so often covered up abuses of power (2001:8).

Literacy at its most basic is instrumental, automatised reading and writing while critical literacy develops and sharpens analytical skills essential

for adopting and maintaining distance from written representations of the world which seek to absorb us. The latter also enables us to see how writing wishes to be understood, how it seeks to position and place us, its readers.

ENG5009 is designed in accord with outcomes-based education, the specially selected apartheid educational antidote and philosophy. In keeping with OBE principles the module is broken down into discrete performance chunks sequenced in lock-step fashion. At the instrumental level learning becomes exact procedures, practices and lists of operating principles, taking us back to a practice of the past, Prinsloo's transmission mode of education, easily assessable objectives and right answers for narrow bits of words. The module gives the impression of being specially focussed and career-oriented with its content appropriately apportioned into predictable standardized segments.

In contrast ENG5001, the literature module, also on offer since the first wave of canonical change, comprises a number of texts by authors already named above. It requires much more reading, decoding, interpreting and understanding, skills now apparently useless and irrelevant in the age of the surface image and instant gratification. Students whom Codrington generally characterises as the highly expectant and aspirational "millennium generation" have no use for this type of module and are, further, not trusting of the ability of adults, understand that time is a precious

commodity and want their information in 20-second sound bites.... (2001:3).

The way outcomes-based education in response to the economic zeitgeist is developing and stabilising into more fixed forms (for the sake of accountability) and procedures (for monitoring purposes) also determines that ENG5009 is visibly and measureably piece-meal and fragmentary. ENG5001, far less organised and sequenced as a wholistic entity, focuses on texts and processes that cannot be reduced to specific, neatly packaged outcomes. The teaching of critical thinking, analysis, synthesis and writing that it is meant for do not easily translate into step-by-step advancement towards predictable outcomes.

More insidiously, the language of skills embedded in ENG5009 implicitly and inexorably degrades the character and social and critical values of ENG5001 especially when the two modules are being compared by prospective Vista students, who, given their learning background and other shortcomings, are in reality confronted by Hobson's choice. As to employment opportunities Rick Rylance and Judy Simons found in 2001 in their research that aptitudes and attitudes were more important to employers than particular knowledges which in standard practice are picked up on the job (2001:74). Rylance and Simons write that for employers aptitudes of mind, skills in communication and analysis, the ability to learn and adapt speedily, the staying power, confidence and commitment to

see things through... are highly valued (Rylance & Simons, 2001:74). Other desirable attributes noted by Marginson include: A confidence, the capacity to be pro-active in new and familiar situations, learning how to learn, flexibility, adaptability, responsiveness, sensitivity openness ... and dispassionate thought (1994: 250).

Simultaneously, however, and at the other end of the desirability scale the need for professional judgement, discretion, creativity and such-like skills is replaced by standardised, carefully timed, repetitive know-how packed in short training programmes, similar to the likes of ENG5009, which also make new employees dispensable and disposable. As Luke reports most new jobs are predicted to be in the low-paid retail, trade and service sectors and many of these jobs will involve repetitive and deskilled textual competence (1992: 3-15).

Altogether this goes to show that the link between purpose-focussed study and employment destination is complex and not crude and direct as is generally believed. To add to which matching supply to demand in terms of training and employment do not work well because of the time lags in perception and fulfilment of needs. At best it is little better than guesswork even if counteracting imperatives are taken into account.

Higher education as a whole protractedly transmits and enables the

development of graduate values which would be difficult to nurture in a blunt, instrumental, short and work-obsessed environment (Rylance & Simons, 2001: 74). Moreover from the point of view of entry into employment, life-time earnings and prospects, job satisfaction, overall quality of life or career mobility the value of higher education automatically compounds in and of itself.

Predominating today, however, is the substantial rhetorical investment in the argument of vocationalism. The easy to master language of skills appears tough and practical. It makes politicians, its chief spokespersons, look as if they are doing their jobs and really making a difference particularly in the lives of the impoverished and illiterate who form a major part of the South African populace and from which most Vista students are drawn. Like most people they are unaware that their beliefs come from discourse which has ideological and therefore political implications. In time beliefs become naturalised common sense understanding and are accepted as apolitical truths. The more dominant and popular the beliefs the more natural and commonsensical they appear.

The strategy of using the vocational focus is to separate the lack of skills from the poor, changing economic climate. By so doing the responsibility for unemployment is placed totally and one-sidedly on the unemployed. It is easier and more effective to focus on them as the source of the deficit than tackling the complex causes of unemployment and a

shrinking economy at the heart of which lies the crisis of the political economy of capitalism. Apple elaborates further on the structural problems of poverty, of the de-skilling and elimination of jobs, of capital flight, of systemic racism [no matter 1994] and sexism [whatever the constitutional assertions], problems that are A naturally generated out of our current economic and political arrangements (1987: viii). Aronowitz and Giroux add in their critique of the “literacy crisis” of the 70s that the deficit of the unemployed is produced by the constitution of the job market, by social and economic inequality and political powerlessness (1985:102).

The vocational wrapped up in the rhetoric of caring and compassion for the poor and needy leads to the production of ENG5009, which certainly has a role to play in a range of badly needed literacies; however, conforming to a prescribed form (and hence the packaging of content which for the most part is left very much to module designers) clearly derives from the bureaucracy of power and not truly transformative educational management. As Said warns: If you turn the classroom into a kind of substitute for political action ... then you’re corrupting the whole system (quoted by Kachka, 1999: 2).

Education is now firmly ensconced in the rhetoric and terminology of skills which because of increasing political backing makes inaudible any other educational language. In response to the demand for explicit vocational training a

module such as ENG5001 is crudely interrogated in terms of marketability and employability (Gardiner, 2001:10). ENG5009 couched in management-speak for the managerially-aspirant, on the other hand, shrivels mental horizons by subjecting information presentation techniques, the ability to sift knowledge effectively and summarise complex arguments to checklists. Damian Ruth writes that when universities start borrowing discourse from business, and inventing themselves as corporations, they do more than sell themselves off. They are taking part in the contraction of public space (2001:2). Further, maintaining a healthy civil society is not the aim of business, whereas enjoying civil society status can help profits (Ruth, 2001:2).

English teaching is in the throes of a legitimisation crisis, part of the larger crisis bedevilling higher education and the training and exercising of the mind in the Age of the Market. The language of noble values and aspirations at the core of English teaching, reformulated more diversely in the first wave of canonical change, is being drowned in the political language of skills. This is not without good reason given that defining the humanities, the study of man, has always been problematic since it is presumed that we already fully understand the concept being defined. The humanities focusses on understanding the human condition, the human person as subject and object and agent and victim. It grounds itself in the world as found and experienced and as it appears.

The Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (Department of Education, 1997) lists as one of its major national goals the production of graduates with the skills and competencies that build the foundations for lifelong learning, including critical, analytical, problem-solving and communication skills, as well as the ability to deal with change and diversity, in particular the tolerance of different views and ideas, all of which are better able to unfold in literary than literacy modules. In keeping with the national goal the communication in demand transcends basic literacy in the growing service sector, for instance, where the imperatives of market competition and exchange place a premium on the skills of selling, negotiating, persuading and impressing (Marginson, 240). The skills listed converge with values of the academic community, some of which were abjured by Prinsloo's and Vista students who, unable to cope with academic demands or on the look-out for the easier option, enrol for ENG5009.

Instead of confronting learning and other problems head-on, a costly and lengthy undertaking with no guarantee of success, national policy makers deflect attention by elevating far cheaper and quicker to teach so-called market skills. As part of the ideological state apparatus such skills are prioritised in the hope of fulfilling instrumental ends of economic and state survival. To that elusive end students' pedagogical

identities are predetermined, discipline-based academics are disenfranchised of their expertise and the country becomes a pawn of multi-national conglomerates in a way reverting to pre-1994 times.

All the while educators are struggling to find their feet in a rapidly changing society which they do not fully understand. And while they are not sure that they can respond and deliver since responses different from those of the past are required, the politicians and technocrats, with pretensions to more wisdom than the educators have taken over. In consequence the humanities are separated from real life and academic demands, as reported by Prinsloo, are denied or elided; the vocational, in the guise of panacea for all ills including academic shortcomings of students, supersedes more challenging yet somewhat intangible forms of higher education. In line with business thinking and sure-fire, discernible, assembly-line productivity all of the complexities of education are consigned to one basket as facilitation replaces teaching.

Even in this Age of the Market learners have to be exposed to a range of literacies, at the very core of which is reading and writing so that they can function flexibly in the work-place and as human beings. But as Barton and Hamilton show literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relations, and some literacies become more dominant, visible and influential than others (1998:7). The students at Rhodes, UCT and University of Pretoria

studying literature no matter how traditional, as a case in point, are widening their life and work choices as they participate in a more liberal sense of democratic practices.

Richard Pring shows in an article in 1999 how the new managerial and business-related language of education transforms the way it is defined and organised. Within the framework devised the authority and power over learning is removed from professional educators and put in the hands of politicians. Besides a shift of power what traditionally gives education its impetus, its deliberating processes, its values worth pursuing, and the characteristics of society and the individual desired have all been usurped. Along with that the skills and dispositions that the young need to address and not just escape disadvantage and suffering are also being eroded.

In a manner that harks back to the pre-1994 South African situation those alienated from the standard practices of academic education are being re-directed to knowing their place by a stifling of the propensity for social criticism and action. Yet at the same time however those who can, the new privileged, will have learnt the language, the concepts in general and developed the capacity to examine procedural values and crucial human issues that have been traditionally dealt with in the humanities in a more democratic form of life. The resources provided by the humanities still enable them to address the values, controversies, the use and distribution of power and the

pervasiveness of injustice in order to shape the kind of life that is worth living.

Education needs to encompass both instrumental knowledge and skills to achieve certain ends and the understandings and capacities for deliberating about those ends themselves particularly if they are claimed with such certainty. To borrow from Derek Morrell, the first Joint Secretary of the Schools Council, who advocated the democratisation of the process of problem solving way back in 1964 in the UK: The educational crisis is fundamentally part of a general crisis of values. If education and by implication the curriculum, is not thought of as contributing to a solution of this crisis of values, it can all too easily become an agent of the worst sort of conservatism (1967:8).

The question of values is at the nub of the problems in education; more specifically it is about the authority of politicians versus that of education professionals, some of whom in South Africa have crossed the floor to the political arena. Consequently their ability to remain constantly open to deliberation in order to tackle uncertainties and choices is highly suspect. Together with career politicians they envisage managing education in business terms, controls and targets in spite of having spent many years in the classroom exploring and challenging the very idea of certainty itself. In the hands of such agents the classroom ceases to be the microcosm of deep cultural uncertainties

as certainties which may not produce the outcomes expected are relentlessly pursued. In consequence, under the palatable guise of a democratic process there lurks, because it remains unspoken, the danger of being victims once more of a sociology driven by the wrong educational metaphors derived from business management.

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