

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Finding Common Ground towards Progressive Transformation in Student Residence Spaces: Residence Committee Members as Bricoleuric Brokers

Neo Pat Maseko* & Shawn Stützner**

Abstract

This article stemmed from discussions related to residence committee members and their role as leaders within their communities. The ideas presented during these conversations gave rise to a research interest for a conceptual exploration of collaborative and progressive social transformative brokering within a complex context. In particular, the identified interest within this context relates to finding common ground, between, inter alia, student affairs management, and residence committee (RC) management in residence spaces. The specific focus is the RC leadership team as strategists who are positioned to deal with potential conflict resolution in policy interpretation and enactment. The argument presented here has to do with the extent to which they can do this in a manner that facilitates the collegial and amicable interpretation of policy in residence communities. Inherent within this is the notion of managing the potential disjuncture between policy formulation and policy implementation. The primary question about this concern finds expression in how RCs move from being part of active cultural residence spaces to critical participants in dialogic conversations as part of a multi-perspectival progressive transformation strategy. Indeed, while bringing about transformation, the dynamic issues of brokering cohesion within a context of ideological and political complexity remain. Given the inherent situational complexities, the article adopts a bricoleuric theoretical thread that requires a multi-perspectival orientation. In this regard, appropriate components of critical complexity theory, critical system theories, transformative learning, and hope theory account for this theoretical approach. A further consideration is that of a positionality of finding progressive and transformative common ground. In this regard, the argument revolves around examining the systemic factors that bear relevance for actualising the envisaged intention, that is, common ground in the interests of the common good. At stake in this argument is the notion of RC identity and their role in building a values-based residence system of policy interpretation and enactment, while bridging the ideological divide and finding common ground between the expectations of student affairs management and the residence community.

Keywords

bricoleuric approaches; common ground; complexity theory; dialogic; hope theory; identity; management; progressive; student transformation; system theories; transformative learning

* Dr Patricia Barbara Neo (Neo Pat) Maseko was previously (and at the time of submission) a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of the Free State. She is currently a Research Associate at the Global Research Centre in Gauteng, South Africa. Email: neomaseko9@gmail.com

** Mr Shawn Stützner was Senior Officer: Residence Head & Residence Dialogues Coordinator, University of the Free State, South Africa, at the time of submission. Email: shawnstutzner@gmail.com

Introduction

This article is the result of an invitation to participate in an informal information-sharing session with the residence committee (RC) members of a South African institution of Higher Learning. The leadership structures of an RC represent residences and their constituents, the students. There are over 28 residences on the campus, each led by a residence head (RH) managing the RC and the residence space. The discussions involved 9 RCs and the RH who oversee a residence of over 180 students. The dialogue revolved around the role of the RCs as emergent leaders with a background of student activism, particularly non-violent radicalism, and their ideological navigation of this context. It became apparent, through the discussions, that there was an underlying tension, which gave rise to an existential identity dilemma. The aforesaid emanated from their dual role as student representatives on the one hand and representatives of management structures on the other.

The point of departure of this exploration was a realisation that there was a need for a navigational tool for finding common ground for common good within the complex terrain of student affairs management and RC management. This dual role would also entail recognising that residence communities and spaces encompass a broad spectrum of elements. The RC's ability to navigate the divide between the expectations of student affairs management and the residence community members is a significant factor. It is necessary to appreciate the complexities of creating a common good between the RC's identity and their managerial and leadership role, and in building a values-based residence system. What is worth noting here is the extent to which RCs can progressively manage the holistic philosophical tension between their role-function as RCs and them representing the residence community. This article explores the role of residence committees as agents of transformation in the implementation of policy dictates. Appropriate attention to the issue of cultural identity in contexts of progressive transformation is essential. In this regard, the bricolage¹ and its key components, namely, complexity theory, critical systems theory, transformative learning, and hope theory, are presented as critical elements of navigating the complex contexts of residence spaces for the attainment of the common ground of progressive transformation.

The RCs as Transformative Brokers of Policy Dictates

The specific focus of this conceptual article is the nature and extent of the RC management and student engagement space as that of transformation brokering in a context of policy enactment and its impact upon residence communities. Of significance in this encounter is the implicit or explicit implications it carries for the well-being of

1 The French word bricolage “consists of the adaptive processes by which people imbue configurations of rules, traditions, norms, and relationships with meaning and authority. In so doing, they modify old arrangements and invent new ones, but innovations are always linked authoritatively to acceptable ways of doing things. These refurbished arrangements are common responses to changing circumstances” (Clever, 2012, p. 34). In a qualitative-inquiry-as-bricolage, the intention is to look at the research question from multiple disciplinary perspectives (Hammersley, 2008, p. 65; Joshee, 2008, p. 641).

residence communities. At the time of the informal discussions and at the time of writing this article, the student leadership development programmes of the institution seemingly touched on four categories: generic, specialised leadership forum training, mobilisation, and ad hoc training (student support). All these forums play a critical role in student leadership development. In this article, specific attention focuses on supporting the role of RCs as holistic, beneficial policy brokers who serve the interests of both management and residence communities. Strengthening the capacity of RCs informs the expectation of a cultural shift from positions of student activism (Koen, Cele & Libhala, 2006) as members of residence community spaces, to positions of leadership (Nel, 2016) as facilitators and co-creators of potential pathways to a functional common ground.

The view espoused here is that there is a need to re-envision the role of RCs as supportive policy brokers who serve the interests of both management and residence communities. In an approach of student leadership development, the presupposition is towards a paradigmatic shift from a position of radical RC activism (as student leaders, serving the sole interests of students) to non-radical activism from the perspective of simultaneously being members and representatives of leadership. Here, the distinction between radical and non-radical activism is that the former often resorts to drastic (and sometimes violent) measures to bring about change. Radical activism has, in recent times, also manifested itself in what has become known as fallism² (Hendricks, 2018). Conversely, non-radical activism recognises the need for a process that takes current situational dictates into account, which might require time to effect the desired transformation. It should be noted that, in this instance, transformation refers to significant structural, systemic and ideological changes (Speckman & Mandew, 2014, p. 47). Finding the middle road between the two poles of the spectrum (radical and non-radical activism) is presented as part of a strategy to facilitate the creation of a transformative common ground between student affairs management committees and student residence communities.

Cultural Identity within Spaces of Progressive Transformation

Of critical importance, within the context of this discussion, is the assertion that, while facilitating and contributing towards the envisaged transformation, the dynamic issues of ideological and political complexity remain. The primary question in this regard focuses on how RCs move from being part of active cultural identity spaces within residences to engage in dialogic mediatory conversations as leaders. Accordingly, dialogic engagement is a part of a multi-perspectival and multi-cultural progressive transformation strategy. A subsidiary question to this would be what navigational tools the RCs use to facilitate the requisite ability and agility from being a constituent of the collective residence community towards being a part of RC management as part of leadership structures. Inherent in these questions are issues of dialogism, identity and progressive transformation (Price, Wallace,

2 “Fallism was coined as a term to describe the ideological drive of disruption, and seeing the fall of something in mobilising around the symbolism of oppression and struggle, most notably challenges continued discrimination and exclusion on the basis of race, class, sex and the exclusionary nature of capitalism and the commodification of higher education” (Kotze, 2018, p. 112).

Verezub & Sinchenko, 2019; Louw, 2012). A progressive transformation that implies, amongst other things, the attainment of common ground. In this instance, the interpretation and enactment of policy dictate the conceptualisation of common ground. The ability to create conditions that are conducive to amicable co-existence, such as negotiation skills, is viewed as part of the envisaged progressive transformation, irrespective of the undercurrents of potential conflict.

This article thus presents the bricoleuric theoretical orientation (Lévi-Strauss, 1966; Kincheloe, 2001; Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011; Kincheloe, 2011; McLaren & Kincheloe, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) as a tool to conceptualise and actualise the complexity of finding common ground and attaining progressive transformation.

Associated Theoretical Approaches and Considerations of the Bricolage

This section focuses on theoretical approaches about a terrain characterised by contextual complexities. This issue addresses a noteworthy theoretical lens appropriate for an exploration of these new complex multiple dimensions. Given the attendant complexities of the setting of student residence spaces, the article adopts a bricoleuric theoretical approach that requires a multi-perspectival orientation. The metaphor of a jazz ensemble or that of a colourful tapestry is often used to depict the multi-logical and multi-perspectival nature of the bricolage (Kincheloe, 2008; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004).

In the instance of this article, the bricoleuric theoretical approach comprises critical complexity theory, critical system theories, transformative learning and hope theory (Lévi-Strauss, 1966; Denzil & Lincoln, 2005; Kincheloe, 2001, 2011). The context of this discussion engages in the interaction commonly understood as the bricolage within bricoleuric research. The research builds from postmodern understandings and multiple disciplinary perspectives, employing multiple methods of inquiry as well as diverse theoretical and philosophical underpinnings (Given, 2008, p. 641). Bricoleurs examine the “complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation that represents the researcher’s images, understandings and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 6). We fully recognise the delimitation of sources supporting diversity and inclusion on gender-neutral terms relating to bricoleuric research. However, with the feministic voices of contestation around the engendered use of this non-gender-neutral term (Wheeler & Bangor, 2015, p. 8) and within the context of this discussion, we present the terms bricoleur (male) and bricoleuse (female) to represent those who engage in this type of research. Of further note is the fact that the RC members, as potential brokers of peace in a complex and potentially conflictual space, could also be labelled as potential bricoleurs and bricoleuses (Wheeler & Bangor, 2015, p. 8).

Complexity theory within a terrain of complexity

The bricolage, as a multi-perspectival lens that is “grounded on an epistemology of complexity,” Kincheloe’s (2011, p. 254) is an appropriate multi-perspectival lens for this terrain of complexity because it takes into account the complexities of the lived world. Within this context, bricoleurs and bricoleuses move into the domain of complexity

that transcends mono-dimensional reductionism. Bricoleurs/bricoleuses, acting on the complexity principle and operating in the complexity zone, understand that in its embrace of complexity, the bricolage constructs a far more active role for humans. Complexity occurs both in shaping reality and in creating the research processes and narratives that represent it. Such an active agency rejects deterministic views of social reality that assume the effects of particular social, political, economic and educational processes. At the same time and in the same conceptual context, this belief in an active human agency refuses standardised modes of knowledge production (Kincheloe, 2011, p. 255). Of relevance to this discussion is the fact that residence spaces lend themselves to complexity because of the heterogeneous composition of all parties.

Complexity theory as it pertains to residence communities

Bricoleurs/bricoleuses operating in a terrain of complexity understand that they must transcend the tendency of reductionism and struggle to comprehend the processes of complexity. For example, the central focus of the relationship in being an RC considers the dynamics of the self, being an RC representative within the residence culture, and holding a managerial element of leadership. Who we are as human beings is dependent on the nature of such relationships and connections. Of significance for this discussion is the fact that bricoleurs/bricoleuses understand that in such complex contexts, diverse epistemologies will develop as a result of different historical and cultural locales, within and outside of self. The issue of multiple epistemologies emerges in these locales of complexity (Stewart, 2001; Wolf-Bronwyn, 2013). Depending on where stakeholders and role players stand in the multi-dimensional and complex web of reality, they will come to see and understand different phenomena in different ways (Kincheloe, 2011; Denzil & Lincoln, 2005).

The fundamental idea to understand complexity is the notion that all narratives obtain meaning not merely by their relationship to material reality but from their connection to other narratives (Kincheloe, 2011). Concerning the context of this discussion, the interactions of residence committees and residence communities constitute a complex terrain. Concomitant to this idea of complexity is the notion of the “literacy of complexity” that understands the intersecting roles and social locations of all human beings and the multiple layers of interpretations of self, contexts and social actors involved (Kincheloe, 2011, p. 257). Adding to this complexity is the layer of the intricate power relations of the dialogical practices within the three-layered complex contexts comprising, in this case, management, student residence committees and communities that fall under the scrutiny of this discussion.

What is of significance in these contexts is the idea that there are fictive elements to all representations and narratives.³ In other words, the contextual fields that form the

3 The attribution of fictive elements, namely, romance, tragedy, satire, comedy, and absurdism, will not sit well with some researchers. Kincheloe (1997, pp. 66–67) explains, however, that the fictive mechanics furnishes the foreclosure of worldview in the triad of reality–fiction–imaginary synergy, explaining that it endows the creative imaginary with an enunciated grounding. He says the recognition of the synergy produced in this relationship is a key to the reconceptualisation of qualitative research narratives.

foci of this discussion highlight fictive dimensions that may be influenced by a variety of forces, including linguistic factors, narrative employment strategies and cultural prejudices (Kincheloe, 2011, p. 259). The narratives that stem from cultural biases towards the ‘other’ are a further consideration in the specific ways in which these cultural biases and assumptions shape and interact with knowledge reception and production – thus drawing attention to the possible fictive (and possibly distorted) representations and constructions of the other narrative from a different perspective. Those, as mentioned above, are often the constituent (mis)representations and (mis)interpretations that give rise to conflict and act as a barrier to finding common ground in contexts of the complexity such as the context of residence spaces.

Bricoleurs/bricoleuses operating in the complexity zone understand that knowledge can never be autonomous or be complete in and of itself. Within the context of this discussion, the residence management, RCs and residence communities are the intersecting contextual fields. Viewing the world from a mono-dimensional perspective is too complex (from an exclusionary perspective) to facilitate the attainment of common ground (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), and bricoleurs/bricoleuses are opposed to what could constitute reductionist monological knowledge. In understanding new ways of dealing with the complications of the social, cultural, psychological, and educational life within the structures of residence communities is at the forefront of complexity. Of particular interest is the interpretation and enactment of policy to find common ground within the context of this discussion.

Finding common ground brings into view the issue of knowledge production (and reception), which is a far more complicated process, with more impediments to the act of making sense of the world. This logic aligns with Lévi-Strauss’ (1966) initial conceptualisation of the bricolage. His concept originated from an understanding of the complexity and unpredictability of the cultural domain. With this in mind, the central issue straddling the divide between cultures is the position of the RCs. That is, balancing the culture of the residence systems from which their positions of power accrue, and the committees to whom they are accountable as part of the leadership structures.

Critical systems theory and thinking within the bricolage

Systems thinking emerges because of the interplay of the residence structure and its constituents. In this instance, the network comprises relevant members of institutional management, RCs, student residence members and numerous stakeholders. It is, therefore, essential to take note of the different elements within these roles. A further consideration is a cognisance of how a system functions. An analysis in this approach seeks to understand the role of the different elements and behaviour of each component with specific regard to practical systemic functionality. Finally, systems thinking entails the aspect of synthesis that is about appreciating the interrelated components of a network. Being able to learn about the interlinking dynamics and combining that knowledge with how it behaves amongst other interrelated systems, helps to identify better solutions for a problem (Stroh, 2015). In this

context, this knowledge implies the ability of the RC to broker a peaceful interpretation of policy implementation within residence communities.

A central assumption of systemic thinking is put forward by Campbell, Coldicott and Kinsella (1994, p. 16); Louw (2012, p. 14) and Gharajedaghi (2011, p. 89). They argue that human systems operate because of the meaning that members ascribe to the activities around them. Indeed, this dynamic is always purposeful towards decision-making and wise repositioning that can cause attitudinal change. Furthermore, systemic thinking focuses on holistic thinking to avoid monolithic views and reductionism and what the bricolage seeks to avoid (Kincheloe, 2011, p. 266). When RCs entangle the culture, activities of the residence space, and the policy of management, they place a certain meaning to the problem in how they represent the students and management. For instance, out of fear of the expectations of management's policy, the meaning may be: "I will turn my attention away from the students caught drinking in their bedrooms so that I can remain part of the culture of the residence." In this case, their allegiance to the culture of the residence might supersede their management identity. The potential outcome of such action hampers a collaborative approach in the interests of progressive transformation and cultural competence. Systems thinking thus necessitates a transformative dialogic.

Transformative Learning as a Pivotal Part of Conciliatory Cultural Proficiency

A dialogic that takes the theoretical underpinnings of transformative learning into account (Mezirow, 1991; 1998; 2006) is imperative in the pursuit of common ground. The tenets of transformative learning are constructivist in orientation. In reality, interpretation implies how things appear in an individual's experience and are central to how they make sense of them. The interpretation of meaning has to do with perspectives and schemes. Perspectives entail "broad sets of codes, namely sociolinguistic codes, psychological codes, and epistemic codes" (Mezirow, 1994, p. 223). Individuals' socialisation, dispositions, and meaning-making regimens influence perspectives. Schemes have to do with "the constellation of concepts, beliefs, judgements and feelings which shape a particular interpretation" (Mezirow, 1994, p. 223). A key component of transformative learning is the ability to change one's perceptions and schemes through reflection. The relevance of this is that reflection lays the foundation for transformative cultural proficiency (Arriaga & Lindsey, 2016, p. 18).

Transformative learning requires that RCs reflectively familiarise themselves with systemic factors, including their interpretations and proclivity towards these factors that get in the way of progressive transformation. Critical questions in this regard are: what elements could we foreground that can help all stakeholders to get to the destination that breaks the cycle of that which carries the potential of anarchism? A further critical question in this regard is: what poses the possibility of dictatorial authority? Inherent in these questions and assumptions are issues of dialogism and progressive transformation, to find a middle ground.

In this regard, facilitation skills are critical in the dialogic encounter because they can break the cycle of mono-dimensionalism in relation to perspectival positions (Berry,

2011, p. 282). It is interrupting this sequence that ties in well with the views espoused by bricoleurs and bricoleuses who are averse to reductionist views, which preclude other aspects of the system under scrutiny. Given this, such aversion opposes views and values regarded as divergent and conflictual. In the process, it shifts away from not acknowledging or allowing for difference and diversity. Here, it is necessary to point out that the RCs, as brokers of peaceful policy implementation, should display the ability to recognise that difference should refrain from adopting a position of animosity. In this regard, one of the traits of conflict resolution is negotiation skills that assist with the navigation of potentially explosive situations (Havelock & Zlotolow, 1995, p. 10).

Additionally, the ability of the RC to be well versed in the culture of residence spaces and the training they have of the policy of the university enables them to mitigate against negativity (Moloi, 2016). An attendant result is that they are a valuable resource concerning institutional memory, which equips them with navigational skills for traversing between two (or more) cultures. For example, a student leader from a South African campus has mentioned how residences are significant to the student community. Essentially, RCs in residences give students a sense of ownership, citizenship and identity. Moloi (2016) explains how residence primes are, at times, more influential than most SRC officers. The reason is that they champion the aspirations of their residences and serve as the link to management. In other words, considering the RCs privileged position, they can navigate a space that straddles two cultural divides – these are the culture of management and the culture of residence communities. Furthermore, in this way, they carry the potential for cultural proficiency as envisioned by Arriaga and Lindsey (2016). In other words, RCs can potentially be resource providers for transformative and progressive purposes. Therefore, the inferred view is that, as transformation agents, they have the potential to use the cultural capital they have from both sides of the divide – that of the residence committees and communities – for transformative purposes.

Within the context of our work and experience the RCs are student representatives appointed by the residence students. As representatives, they communicate information from management to the residence. In certain instances, RCs relay information from the perspective of being a student and not from their leadership position. The differences between the expectations of students and management are, at times, so disparate that they cause desperation and endless conflicting agendas. Indeed, RCs serve as a conduit between residences and management regarding the implementation of policy dictates.

Very often, RCs are student representatives appointed strategically by students. The students' approach is for the RCs to represent them by being faithful to the traditions of the residence. In truth, living in the same residences while still holding on to the same cultural identities before their election into leadership consequentially keep RCs intact with their fellow residence community members. It is through these traditions that RCs communicate information from management to students. However, facing a new challenge of paradigm-shifting to assimilate the new 'double-identity' of being student residence representatives while simultaneously serving as representatives of management remains a key issue. The main objective in this second identity, namely, that of occupying positions of

leadership, is that they are also expected to contend with executing the policy, which is an execution of finding common ground rooted in hope.

The role of hope theory in conflict resolution

Meaningful dialogue requires motivation between students, RCs, and management. As RCs still living within their robust cultural residence spaces and management requiring the implementation of policy, it can constitute a slippery and complex navigational terrain. The precedent necessitates a more collaborative approach between these stakeholders for the actualisation of common ground. It is envisioning the consensus as a focal point for looking at the complexities of diversity from a conciliatory and systems perspective that augur well for progressive transformation. The assumption is that systemic success stems from holism, where the notion of differences should not translate into counter-productiveness, but rather, it should foster the facilitation of a common consensus.

When looking at the scenario above, it becomes evident that the attempts at brokering sustainable progressive transformation have implications for communal and social transformation. Without transformation based on a theory of hope, the following three often manifest: “revenge/retaliation, excuse/apology/denial, and hatred/violence/destruction. All three attack the realm of human dignity and integrity” (Louw 2003, p. 396). In this regard, the collaboration can be carried further to broker peace through goals and pathways of hope. Accordingly, Snyder (2002) distinguishes between high hope and low hope, with the former being the best positioned for achieving the desired results wherein progressive transformation attains a common ground.

Contrary to the above, low hope is a state of being that is affected by negative contexts, whereas high hope can transcend and counter various contexts of difference. In the context of this discussion, this starts within specific residence spaces, moving internally into the general university community and outwardly into communities. These attempts are, therefore, intended to serve the interests of the common good within and outside of the institution. The essential argument here is that the relationship dynamic between student affairs management and the RCs carries far-reaching implications for sustainable hope in residence communities, with implications for community development and civic leadership engagement.

Notably, RCs, transitioning between students’ interests and management policies, need to strengthen a clear sense of identity within the complexity of this space. The issue of identity comes into play concerning the dilemma of the RCs in straddling the divide between a residence culture that embraces a certain ideology and their position as leaders who have to abide by and apply institutional policy dictates. The argument of hope connected to identity can indeed be that the value of inter- and intra-human communication impacts the relational dynamic of human dignity (Louw, 2012, p. 55). Substantially, the challenge for the RCs is the responsibility of negotiating a collaborative space – firstly, from an internal dialogical space to create communicative linkages that counter difference and secondly, to create an enabling environment for diversity and

cultural competence (Arriaga & Lindsey, 2016). Therefore, the argument presented here is that identity and human dignity are critical components in a collaborative and progressive transformation of hope towards finding common ground.

For example, McGeer (2004, pp. 101, 102) explains that hope involves a complex dynamic of attitude, emotion, activity and disposition because it is, more deeply, a unifying and grounding force of human agency. That is, both conceptually and developmentally, human agency must primarily and distinctively feature hope. She quotes Snyder (1995, 2000) by explaining that indeed, hope is a cognitive activity that involves setting concrete goals, and negotiating and navigating pathways of hope to achieve those goals through one's willpower or agency.

Discussion

The pursuit of common ground points towards the need for a dialogic encounter in which the RC members can help the students and management find and make the best use of strengthening capacity. These resources entail a bricoleuric dialogic encounter of collaboration. This article argues, therefore, that dialogue should have a critical space in residences as it opens up the process for talking about tensions in symbols, traditions and systems. For example, Schirch and Camp (2007, p. 68) emphasise that dialogue is a process for talking about tension-filled topics and that it is increasingly apparent that people are seeing the need for better ways of talking. For that matter, it is essential to point out that both formal and informal dialogue, without the guidance of a facilitator, can lead to subjective opinions. Indeed, the diverse contexts of residence spaces give rise to patterns of behaviour which are ideological, cultural and political within the broader residence community. A study conducted on student interaction based on residence design reveals that residence contexts carry the potential for conflict. Their findings reveal that many students have interactions in close proximity to their own room and in their respective corridors (Brandon, Hirt & Cameron 2008, p. 70). However, it is in these spaces that the policy is deemed to restrict the students' personal space. For example, there are limitations on students as to how much noise they can make and that they cannot smoke in their room or corridor. Fines apply if they are caught drinking alcohol in their rented space or if they have guests sleeping over or doing anything that would be regarded as a contravention of policy dictates. The assumption is that the ground for tensions may include the notion that policy enforces unfair living conditions on students. This is often related to the lack of residence spaces for student interaction. However, it is in these spaces that the policy is deemed to restrict the students' personal space, thus creating a paradoxical situation. Caught in this potentially conflictual dialogic encounter between students and management are the RCs. In RCs avoiding cutting corners in their responsibilities, it draws attention to the need for effective dialogue between people of diverse experiences and beliefs, which usually requires a process that should be guided by a facilitator (Schirch & Camp, 2007, pp. 114-115). It is increasingly apparent that people are seeing the need for better ways of talking. In this regard, the dialogue is a process for talking about tension-filled topics

(Schirch & Campt, 2007, p. 68). For example, it is accepted in residence for fellow students to consider behavioural patterns that are reflective of ideological, cultural and political nuances within the broader residence community. At stake is residence dialogue that conflicts with policies that universities stipulate for such spaces. In this regard, there are forms of dialogue in which residence students protest against these policies.

Consequently, the RC's quality of leadership captures the conflictual dialogic encounter between students and management. Indeed, what is commonly found in this dialogic encounter is the conflictual dialogue between diverse cultural identities, experiences and belief systems needing more dialogic peaceable means. We argue here that collaborative and progressive social transformation calls for a dialogic approach aimed at drawing together different pathways into common perspectival positions of hope.

Conclusion

To this end, the argument presented here is that the RCs have an obligation as student leaders to find and agree upon a common consensus of eliminating every obstacle that would threaten or hinder the attainment of the objective of academic success and overall multi-layered wellness. A significant step in this process is a shared understanding of the terms and rules of engagement in this journey of finding common transformative ground. For example, the interpretation and implementation of the policy should be carefully considered in a multi-perspectival process. In this regard, a bricoleuric approach that encompasses emergent complexity theory, critical systems theory, transformative learning and hope theory, as presented, are useful navigational tools. This approach, we conclude, will augur well for a transformative unifying common ground that will be progressively cognisant of the multi-dimensional nature of residence spaces. This approach would be to find a middle ground that equips the RCs to negotiate and navigate their way in the complex cultural divide between RC leadership and residence membership. The envisioned result is positive ramifications for the RC's future role as culturally progressive leaders with an impact on creating pathways for transformative civic engagement.

References

- Arriaga, T.T & Lindsey, R.B. (2016). *Opening doors: an implementation template for cultural proficiency*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Berry, K.S. (2011). Embracing radical research: Key works in critical pedagogy. In: K. Hayes, S.R. Steinberg & K. Tobin (Eds.), *Key works in critical pedagogy. Bold Visions in Educational Research*. Volume 32 (pp. 279-284). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6091-397-6_2
- Brandon, A., Hirt, J.B. & Cameron, T. (2008). Where you live influences who you know: Differences in student interaction based on residence hall design. *Journal of College & University Student Housing*, 35(2), 62-79.
- Campbell, D., Coldicott, T. & Kinsella, K. (1994). *Systemic Work with Organizations: A New Model For Manager and Change Agents*. London: Karnac Books.
- Cleaver, F. (2012). *Development through Bricolage: Rethinking Institutions for Natural Resource Management*. New York: Routledge.

- Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.) (2005). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Third edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gharajedaghi, J. (2011). *Systems Thinking: Managing Chaos and Complexity: A Platform for Designing Business Architecture*. Third edition. Burlington, MA: Elsevier Science.
- Given, L.M. (2008). Politics of Qualitative Research. In: *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909>
- Hammersley, M. (2008). Bricolage and Bricoleur. In: L.M. Given (Ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. Volumes 1&2 (pp. 65–66). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Havelock, R.G. & Zlotolow, S. (1995). *The Change Agent's Guide*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications.
- Hendricks, C. (2018). Decolonising universities in South Africa: rigged spaces? *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies – Multi- Inter- and Transdisciplinarity*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/18186874.2018.1474990>
- Joshee, R. (2008). Politics of Qualitative Research. In: L.M. Given (Ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. Volumes 1&2 (pp. 640–643). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kincheloe, J. (1997). Fiction Formulas: Critical Constructivism and the Representation of Reality. In: Tierney, W. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.), *Representation and the text*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Kincheloe, J. (2001). Describing the bricolage: Conceptualizing a new rigour in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(6), 679–692. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040100700601>
- Kincheloe, J.L. (2008). *Knowledge and critical pedagogy: An introduction*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-8224-5>
- Kincheloe, J.L. (2011). On to the next level: Continuing the conceptualization of the bricolage. In: K. Hayes, S.R. Steinberg & K. Tobin, *Key works in critical pedagogy. Bold Visions in Educational Research*. Volume 32 (pp. 253–277). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6091-397-6_21
- Kincheloe, J.L. & Berry, K.S. (Eds.) (2004). *Rigour and complexity in educational research: Conceptualizing the bricolage*. Maidenhead, U.K.: Open University Press.
- Kincheloe, J.L., McLaren, P. & Steinberg, S. (2011). Critical pedagogy and qualitative research: Moving to the bricolage. In: N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Fourth edition. (pp. 163–178). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Koen, C., Cele, M.B. & Libhaber, A. (2006). Student activism and student exclusions in South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 26(4), 404–414. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2005.09.009>
- Kotze, J.S. (2018). On decolonisation and revolution: A Kristevan reading on the hashtags student movements and fallism. *Politikon*, 45(1), 112–127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589346.2018.1418216>
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1966). *The savage mind*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Louw, D.J. (2003). Fides quaerens spem: A pastoral and theological response to suffering and evil. *Interpretation*, 57(4), 384–397. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002096430005700404>
- Louw, D.J. (2012). *Network of the Human Soul: On Identity, Dignity, Maturity, and Life Skills*. Stellenbosch, South Africa: African Sun Media. <https://doi.org/10.18820/9781920338626>
- McGeer, V. (2004). The art of good hope. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 592(1), 100–127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716203261781>
- McLaren, P. & Kincheloe, J. (2007). *Critical pedagogy: Where are we now?* New York: Peter Lang.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative Dimension of Adult Learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Mezirow, J. (1994). Understanding transformation theory. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 44(4), 222-232. <https://doi.org/10.1177/074171369404400403>
- Mezirow, J. (1998). On critical reflection. *Adult Learning Quarterly*, 48(3), 185-198. <https://doi.org/10.1177/074171369804800305>
- Mezirow, J. (2006). An overview of transformative learning. In: P. Sutherland & J. Crowther (Eds.), *Lifelong learning: Concepts and contexts* (pp. 24-38). New York: Routledge.
- Moloi, A. (2016). *Holding My Breath: A memoir*. Kindle edition. Auckland Park, South Africa: BlackBird Books.
- Nel, C. (2016). *What if power, anxiety and love lie at the heart of leadership?* TED Aruba, 23 September. The Village Leadership Consulting. <https://bit.ly/313Jlxq> [Accessed 12 November 2019].
- Price, S., Wallace, K., Verezub, E. & Sinchenko, E. (2019). Student learning assistants: the journey from learning advice to creating community. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 43(7), 914-928. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2018.1425379>
- Schirch, L. & Camppt, D. (2007). *The Little Book of Dialogue for Difficult Subjects: A Practical, Hands-On Guide*. Kindle edition. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.
- Snyder, C.R. (1995). Conceptualizing, measuring and nurturing hope. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 73, 355-360. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.1995.tb01764.x>
- Snyder, C.R. (2000). *Handbook of hope: Theory, measures and applications*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Snyder, C. (2002). Hope Theory: Rainbows in the Mind. *Psychological Inquiry*, 13(4), 249-275. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1304_01
- Speckman, M. & Mandew, M. (Eds.) (2014). *Perspectives on Student Affairs in South Africa*. Somerset West, South Africa: African Minds.
- Stewart, P. (2001). Complexity theories, social theories and the question of social complexity. *Philosophy of the social sciences*, 3(1), 322-360. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004839310103100303>
- Stroh, D.P. (2015). *Systems Thinking for Social Change: A Practical Guide to Solving Complex Problems, Avoiding Unintended Consequences, and Achieving Lasting Results*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.
- Wheeler, S.L. & Bangor, P. (2015). *Researcher as bricoleuse rather than bricoleur: a feminizing corrective note*. <https://bit.ly/2YUzIDR>
- Wolf-Bronwyn, M. (2013). *Using Complexity Theory for Research and Program Evolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199829460.001.0001>

How to cite:

Maseko, P.B.N. & Stützner, S. 2020. Finding Common Ground towards Progressive Transformation in Student Residence Spaces: Residence Committee Members as Bricoleuric Brokers. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, 8(1), 79-91. DOI: 10.24085/jsaa.v8i1.3824