



The Human Face of Accounting Education: An Ubuntu-Informed Approach to Teaching and Learning

Teaching & learning are relational activities. We must be in a relationship with each other for learning to happen (Werder et al. 2010)

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What is Ubuntu/Ukama?

“I am because we are”

- An Africa value system that emphasises on what it means to be human- emphasising on compassion, interconnectedness, love and respect (Ngubane & Makua, 2021)
- *Ubuntu* is a call for educators to prioritise building meaningful relationships with their students.
- A reminder that as educators we can – and we must – bring to class our own cultural and traditional experiences, which make the classroom inclusive to every learner
- At the heart lies the expression

“ I am because we are”

- An ontological assumption that personhood is relational in nature



Ubuntu Pedagogy in Accounting Education

“I learn because you learn”

Le Grange (2014) Ubuntu Curree- *reimagines curriculum as a human centred journey where student identities, lived experiences, realities and social cultural backgrounds are deeply embedded within pedagogical decisions*

(Hlatswayo et al., 2020)

- A teaching and learning approach that promotes an inclusive, community-oriented learning environment grounded on compassion, empathy, mutual respect and humanity.
- Ubuntu offers a framework that values social, racial, cultural and linguistic diversity as part of learning
- Learning is driven by interactive and social engagement between students and educators



Why humanistic approaches to learning now?

- Part of Paulo Freire philosophy
- AI as a studying tool BUT
- But it cannot notice the student who has lost confidence, encourage someone to contribute for the first time, or create the trust that gives students the confidence to question, debate and learn from one another.
- It allows us not to solely focus on whether a treatment is technically correct but ask:
Who is impacted?
What responsibilities do organisations have beyond the shareholders?
How do accounting choices reflect, or obscure relationships of power and accountability?



Understanding of self & others

- Constructivism -self reflection
- Learning becomes an interdependent reflection and a mutual activity
- Learning is grounded on trust, sense of belonging, reciprocity and openness to students and teachers

HOW?

- respectful and fair attitude towards students
- Build lecturer-student & student-student relationships e.g discussion forums, tutorials/seminars
- Responding quickly to student communication– constant feedback
- Active learning techniques e.g



Building positive relationships

- Constructivism –not covered
- Vygotsy- Zone of proximal development
- Students are able to internalize knowledge and achieve more with the guidance of others
- Creating peaceful and harmonious learning environments where students respect one another
- Shared respect allows students to share learning spaces

HOW?

- Know your students beyond student numbers
- Leverage on technology to give quiet students a voice e.g vevox
- Build learning communities e.g accounting circles



(n.) the belief that we all are defined by our compassion and humanity towards others

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Collaborative and Cooperative learning

“Education is about not just about the mind, but the bonds that shape it”

- Students value the support and friendships from other students
- Builds a sense of belonging
- Students learn by networking with others and get integrated into a knowledge community

HOW?

- Encourage dialogue and participation in class e.g padlet and Miro
- Create spaces where students feel they matter– important, recognized, valued with their learning community
- Bring in indigenous values, heritage, cultures in class through practical examples where possible
- Creating office hours for conversations about learning, confidence, career aspirations and professional development.



AN ANTHROPOLOGIST PROPOSED A GAME TO THE KIDS IN AN AFRICAN TRIBE. HE PUT A BASKET OF FRUIT NEAR A TREE AND TOLD THE KIDS THAT THE FIRST ONE TO FIND THE FRUITS WOULD WIN THEM ALL. WHEN HE TOLD THEM TO RUN THEY ALL TOOK EACH OTHERS HANDS AND RAN TOGETHER, THEN SAT TOGETHER, ENJOYING THEIR

Nurturing of students minds

- Constructivism – exploratory and inquiry-based learning
- Ensuring students feel comfortable with making mistakes, expressing gaps in knowledge and engaging openly
- In the context of accounting and finance, where precision and correctness are often emphasised, students can internalise fear of failure that hinders risk-taking and intellectual growth.

HOW?

- Incorporate authenticity and approachability into your teaching approach
- Strategic vulnerability – show students you are not only an educator but fellow human being
- Depending on class size make an effort to learn student names
- Teaching with a positive attitude
- Active listening – acknowledge and respond kindly and appropriately

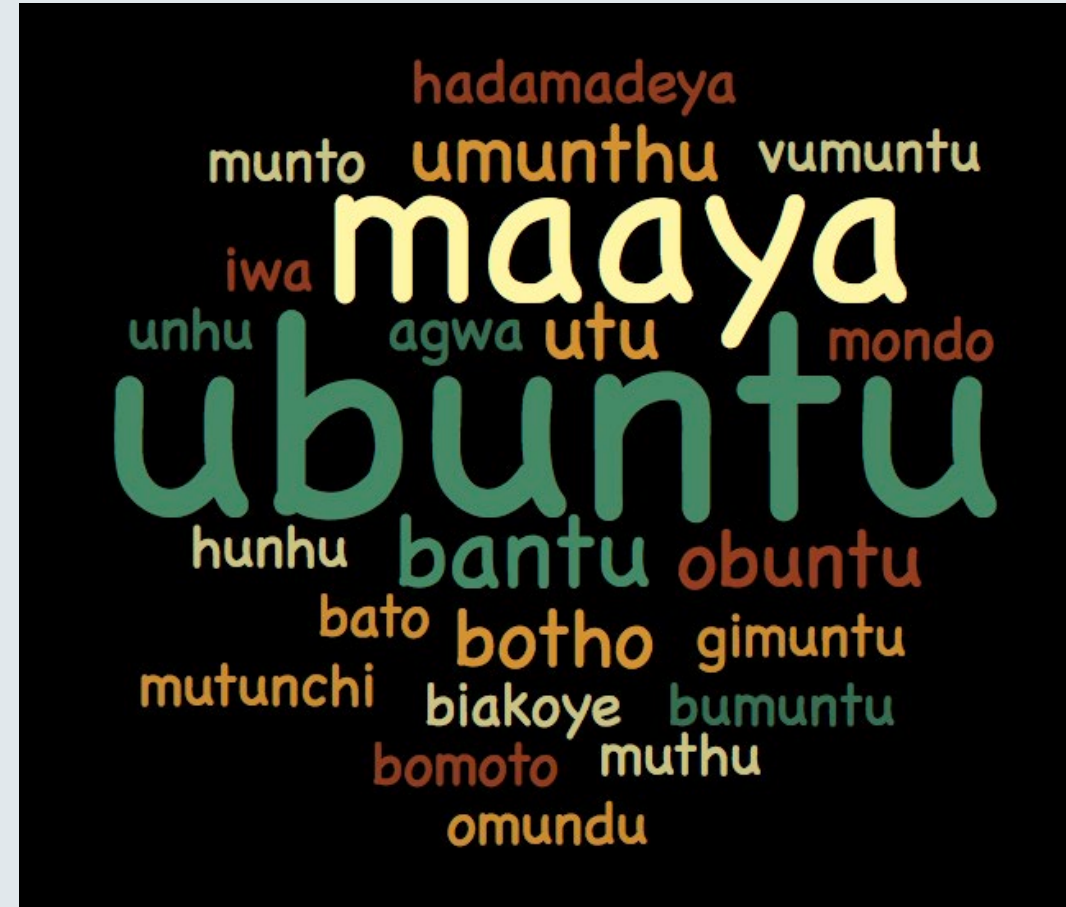


Acknowledgement of diverse student language

- Diverse cohort – bringing their own lived experiences
- Allows students to reflect on their experiences in relation to the topic being covered
- Linguistic diversity presents an opportunity to incorporate multilingual interactions as a pedagogical strategy.

HOW?

- Translanguaging
- Being culturally sensitive
- Approach teaching with sensitivity
- Multimodal approaches to teaching



Teaching from a place of compassion, love & empathy

“If lecturers lack love for the students & for teaching, then they fail to inspire”

- We need to be educators who listen first and lecture second
- Teaching from a place of compassion, love and empathy
- Teaching should be love-centred
- It fosters a psychologically safe environment for students
- Empathy allows students to be kind and compassionate with one another

HOW?

- A genuine passion for the subject matter and care for the students
- Being attentive to students and responsive to the diverse needs of students
- Teaching approaches that promotes emotional, social and ethical dimensions of learning
- Creating space for multiple types of knowledge
- Not doubting the potential and capabilities of students
- Treating students equally & with respect



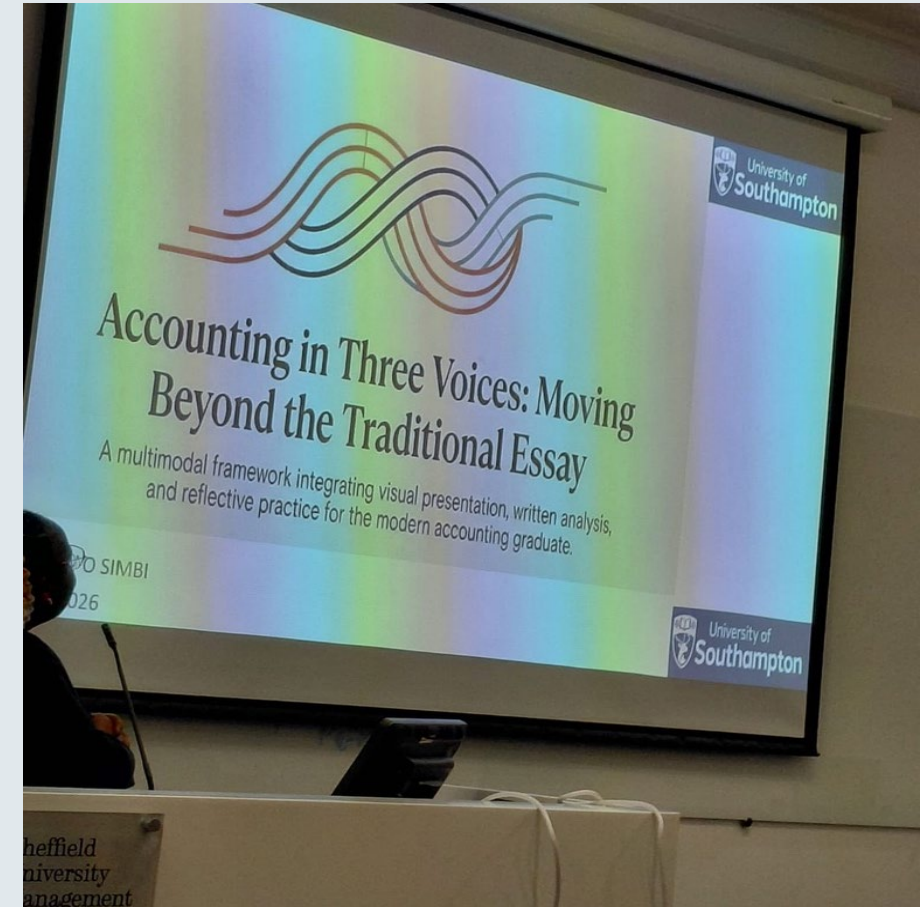
Re-imagining Assessment design

- Assessments for growth
- Assessments should not simply measure learning but should communicate student mattering and prepare students for professional practice
- What message does our assessment send to student?
- Does it communicate:

“can you reproduce technical knowledge under pressure”

How can we design assessments that help students to become confident, reflective and ethical professionals?

- Multimodal Assessments: written, visual and reflective



Other factors to consider

- South African Context vs UK Context
- Professional bodies
- Institutional regulations and support



What if I teach a large class?

- Implement peer instruction by pausing the lecture every 15min to ask a conceptual question-students discuss.
- Name tents
- Permanent neighborhoods- accounting circles
- Arrive earlier to have an informal conversation



What does this mean for my teaching practice?

Ask yourself

- How do I welcome my students?
- How do I get my students talking & interacting?
- How do I communicate to my students that they matter?

How do my students experience learning?

Take into account:

- Prior knowledge
- Student barriers
- Student participation



Questions & Further Discussions



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