



Received: 20 December 2015  
Accepted: 22 April 2016  
Published: 17 June 2016

\*Corresponding author: Agreement Lathi Jotia, Department of Languages and Social Sciences Education, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana  
E-mail: [agreementjotia@yahoo.com](mailto:agreementjotia@yahoo.com)

Reviewing editor:  
Kris Gritter, Seattle Pacific University, USA

Additional information is available at the end of the article

## CURRICULUM & TEACHING STUDIES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Pragmatizing democratic education in Botswana through business education: Countering the scourge of the diploma disease

Agreement Lathi Jotia<sup>1\*</sup> and Burman Musa Sithole<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** Meaningful and emancipatory education which empowers citizens as democrats is the ideal education which can propel the socio-economic and political fibre of nay nation-state. After independence, Botswana aligned her education system with the envisioned development process. The sad thing about this ambitious approach in Botswana is that it sought to produce citizens who would pragmatically be engaged in the development of a democratic nation-state yet the pedagogically approaches to education were at variance with pragmatic and empowering democratic education. The ultimate result became mass production of the educated or degreed citizens who could not penetrate the job market. Bookish and examination-oriented education which is far divorced from vocation and the realities of the job market ultimately results in the perpetuation of frustrated educated citizens who roam the streets as victims of the diploma disease. Botswana is traumatized by the diploma disease as evidenced by escalating figures of unemployed graduates. As such, this paper argues that Botswana's education system should focus on the ideals of pragmatic democratic education by embracing and advancing Business Education which will empower citizens to develop vocational skills which they can utilize to create jobs for themselves, thus countering the current traumatic scourge of the diploma disease.

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Agreement Lathi Jotia is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Botswana. He has taught in Botswana and the US. He conducts research on education and has published widely in the area of Democracy and Education. His research interests span multiculturalism, deep democratic theory, transformative culturally responsive pedagogy, education and globalization, and politics of developing areas.

Burman Musa Sithole is a senior lecturer in business education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Botswana. He has taught business education courses at university level in Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Botswana. He has published widely in his area of interest which is business education pedagogy and has authored college and university teaching modules in this area.

### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This paper delves on issues on democracy and education in Botswana vis-à-vis the challenges of graduate unemployment. The paper contends that democratic pedagogies are essential in Botswana's education system so as to help empower and emancipate the graduate. It is argued that the vocationalization of education and the promotion of Business Education in Botswana's education system will help transform Botswana's education from banking education to pragmatic and transformative education whose graduates can penetrate the job market as well as being empowered to create their own employment. This is pertinent because in this era of rising school-leaver unemployment and low job creation, the education system must make a contribution towards the creation of employment by providing training opportunities laced with doses of Business Education content so that the system churns out graduates who make a difference and not those who feel that the world owes them a living.

**Subjects: Area Studies; Education; Social Sciences**

**Keywords: pragmatism; democratic education; banking education; business education; vocational education; diploma disease; Botswana**

### **1. History of education in Botswana**

The evolution, revolution and transformation of Botswana's education system are tied to the post-independence era which dates back to 1966 when Botswana gained independence from Britain. The socio-economic and political landscape of Botswana at independence was crippled and the educational infrastructure was certainly not an exception. The colonial education instituted before independence was tailored such that it produced puppet graduates who were loyal and sympathetic to the dictates of the British Government and its ethos (Jotia, 2008a). This was an education system which was divorced from praxis and emancipation as evidenced by a pedagogy which drilled the learner to become a humble and loyal servant of the master. The few schools that existed were a result of local and missionary initiatives (Siphambe, 2000).

According to Tabulawa (2013), at independence in 1966 Botswana had a poorly developed educational infrastructure which could not contribute positively to the expansion of the administrative services. One could add here that this was an education system which was disengaged from the ideals of pragmatic democratic principles where citizens are educated for empowerment and robust democratic engagement and self-sustenance. Pragmatic-oriented education conscientizes, empowers and gives the learner the zeal to be hands-on or to be action-driven. At independence, Botswana was one of the poorest countries in the world with a very poor education system and had only 40 degree holders in the entire nation (Tabulawa & Pansiri, 2013 in Harber 2013). Additionally, Siphambe (2000) observes that at independence Botswana had only 100 individuals who had a secondary school certificate which explains why there was need to invest heavily in education so as to improve the human capital.

In the words of Harber and Mncube (2009), this was a deformed education system which produced submissive citizens who danced to the tunes of the regime of the day and nurtured an utter respect for authority. Such an education system also suffocated the linguistic justice of Botswana since it did not promote a pedagogy which recognized the local languages but rather imposed English as the medium of instruction which ultimately robbed Botswana of their identity as they became educated within the image of the dominant other. Any education which fails to orient young people towards the social, economic, cultural and political values of their unique societies, and fails to encourage them to profoundly participate is bound to fail in its effort to build a democratic and just society (Jotia 2008a). Therefore, any education which fails to propel human consciousness into exercising the intellect to liberate the self from the oppressive socio-economic and political misery is an education system which could be labelled as promoting subjugation and the murder of the self. Botswana's education system especially before 1966 could be painted as a system that Freire would refer to as being too traditionalistic and reinforcing necrophilia within humanity more so the learners were educated for alienation which is tantamount to educating to enslave or educating to invade the consciousness of the learner and replace it with that of the dominant invader (Spring, 1994).

In view of the above, the post-independence regime of President Khama found it fit soon after assuming office to come up with a transformational education strategy which would craft and forge forward with an education system aligned to the needs of Botswana but above all, he needed Botswana to design an education system which would contribute positively to the development of the democratic process. It is within this score that the Khama Government brought forth the birth of an educational philosophy branded as Education for Kagisano (social harmony) in 1977 which was envisioned as an education system which would help reinforce and advance the democratic Botswana's national principles of democracy, development, unity and self-reliance (Republic of Botswana, 1977).

Within this scope, education was to be taken with the seriousness it deserves so that it could produce citizens who would participate in the promotion of democratic practice thus ascertaining that at the dawn of the day Botswana is seen as a country whose civic community treasures democratic ideals, contributes towards the development of the country, has citizens who are self-reliant and above all, her populace grows and develops with the distinctive feature of valuing unity and solidarity (Jotia, 2008b). Khama's regime was certainly coming up with an ideology which was far divorced from that of the colonial government whose education was based on the principles of dominance, oppression and the perpetuation of loss of identity. Stitzlein (2012 cited in Peterson, 2014) posits that effective democratic citizenship means having an educated populace able and willing to engage in dissent and that "it is only with the opportunity and capacity to dissent that the citizenry can establish and maintain that the laws and systems guiding them are desired, good, or just" (p. 2). We therefore aver that an educated and enlightened citizenship is important in a democratic country.

Such an education system would nurture among the citizens a positive sense of self and also exalt emotional independence to the degree that the individual develops sound identity and a sense of worth in participating in political life (Schweisfurth, Davies, & Harber, 2002). To date, Education for Kagisano remains the bedrock upon which Botswana's education is cemented but with a little alteration in terms of the national principles since the injection of the fifth principle of Botho (human person personality) which was added by the current regime of president Ian Khama Seretse Khama who is the son of the former and first president of the republic. Botho as a principle is supposed to help Botswana produce citizens with human personality which respects the self as well the dignity of others. The citizens are expected to promote the human dignity by respecting themselves, other people as well as upholding all the laws of the republic.

The citizens with a pronounced human personality within a democratic process are "trusted" to be citizens who can promote the mores of a rule by the people at the same time being hopeful that the world could be turned into a different and better place than it is today-more so democracy as a system of governance is supposed to breed better possibilities for the future (Keane, 2009). A robust and vibrant Botswana education system was tasked with creating a better possibility soon after independence by spearheading the gospel of Education for Kagisano. Whether such an achievement has been made to date remains a subject of intense contention. Boikhutso (2013 cited in Jotia & Mokgosi, 2013) argues that Botswana's post-independence education system has failed to effectively serve the global human capital need since it is currently faced with the problem of mass production of educated graduate citizens who cannot find employment in the work place-a scenario which has led to the biting problem of the "diploma disease".

## **2. Banking education vs. emancipatory education**

Byczkiewicz (2014) relays that education is the primary means through which citizens are socialized in an attempt to cultivate a spirit of good, responsible and productive citizens who will later help shape a healthy and robust world where social consciousness is alive and guiding responsible decision-making. Any form of education which denies citizens an opportunity to embark on praxis and intellectual liberation, is deemed by Freire (2006) as an education system which promotes dehumanization since it denies the learner a humanizing experience whereby he or she is empowered to become fully human as they become emancipated to overcome alienation or unjust societal practices. An education system which promotes oppression, in the words of Freire, is necrophilic and oppressive education system which cherishes the idea of oppression (hence the popular title-Pedagogy of the Oppressed) and also perpetrates the ideals of violence against the intellect of the individual. Such an educational ideology, Freire contends, is characterized by narration as the students become passive objects while the educators become subjects whereby the learners lack the opportunity of experiencing transformative and emancipatory power. Freire argues:

Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat. This is the

“banking” concept of education in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends as far as receiving, filing, and storing deposits ... for apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. (p. 76)

The pre-independence education in Botswana was suffering from the “narration sickness” and with the growing vast trend of graduate unemployment in Botswana today, arguments could be advanced that Education for Kagisano has caught the virus of narration hence lack of empowerment of the learners. Failure to be empowered during the teaching-learning process produces docile and passive citizens who graduate only to become miserable as they fail to make a breakthrough in the labour market. Soon after attaining independence, there was a growing itchy desire to expand education so as to better prepare the youthful population for careers by educating them away from the elitist education which had a curricular irrelevant from the socio-economic and political needs (Meyer, Nagel, & Snyder, 1993).

According to Boikhutso (1993 cited in Jotia & Mokgosi, 2013), the existing curriculum content and pedagogical methods are being summoned to give reasons pertaining to why learners leave schools ill-prepared to venture into the world of work. In a sense, the education system is failing to educate for empowerment or emancipation. Nodding (2013) advises that in the midst of such haunting challenges, it is vital that we question what schools should do differently to accomplish the larger goals of twenty-first century global democracy where individuals can live a full life at the same time paying attention to personal integrity and moral concerns with the general welfare of the public in mind. In order for us to find answers to the problems of the twenty-first century, Dewey’s philosophy on education advises that education systems should be platforms for democratic engagement where deliberative encounters are promoted through dialogue.

Dewey wanted a curriculum rich enough, flexible enough to help each child find what he or she needs to build a satisfying and satisfactory life. Dewey put his trust on methods of intelligence through the nurturing of dialogue, responsible experimentation and the evaluation of current experience—students should come to rational, moral conclusions embraced by social revisionists or to well-argued alternatives (pp. 17–19). Gutmann (1999) on the other hand reflects that the human race is born weak, helpless and to some degree foolish and that it is only through the gift of education [pragmatic education-we must add] that the consciousness of men can form intellect and shape the character of humankind within the ethos of moral justice and democracy. The problems of education in Botswana are triggered and perpetuated by the flawed human resources planning approach which is influenced by a traditionalist-missionary oriented pedagogical learning style which is based on the utilitarian learning perception which mythizes the ideal that all the educated or schooled are going to climb the social ladder or penetrate the job market through examinations or certificates (Tabulawa, 2013). Therefore this examination-oriented education or “bookish education” as Freire would call it, has led to the emergence of undying love for certificates or qualifications which consequently leads to the manifestation of the so-called “diploma disease” otherwise known as the problem of certified and unemployed graduates (Tabulawa, 2013). There is therefore absolute need for a paradigm shift regarding the manner in which Botswana education is being approached.

### **3. The challenges of the diploma disease in Botswana**

Within the post-independence era, Botswana took measures of catching up with development by prioritizing education and putting in place modalities which would open school doors for every child although to date this dream remains a nightmare more so when there are a lot of children in the marginalized communities such as the San who remain isolated educationally (Boikhutso, 2015). Taking into account the integration of world economies through globalization, it became a given that Botswana as a Third World country should advance the phenomenon of schooling or educating the nation as a way of enriching her human resource base. Formal education which leads to certification or one being degreed, became a prioritized factor and even today the future of development of the democratic Botswana is tied to effective quality education which is supposed to produce energetic, vibrant and industrious democratic citizens (Republic of Botswana, 1997).

With the advancement of globalization, it is crystal clear that the development of a learning society which is armed with information, technical civilization and the zeal of driving economic growth and prosperity should be encouraged. Spring (2009) posits that the growth of worldwide educational discourses and institutions led to similar national education agendas, particularly the notion that education should be viewed as an economic investment with the goal of developing human capital or better workers to promote economic growth (p. 3). Such an initiative led to what Dore (1976) refers to as the bureaucratization of economic life in modern societies through the universalization of educational attainment which guaranteed a certain level of qualification, which in the ultimate sadly results in the overproduction of qualified but unemployed job seekers. Such a scenario results in the boom of the qualified but unemployed frustrated graduates who have to compete fiercely in the job market. The diploma disease therefore becomes manifest when a syndrome of the qualified but jobless graduates becomes a mushrooming daily bread.

Making reference to Dore's concept of the diploma disease, Tabulawa (2013) draws instances from Francis (1979) who acknowledges that the education system of Botswana has focused largely on sponsored mobility whereby success in school examinations becomes paramount as a vehicle (supposedly) of elevating an individual to a higher social ladder as they begin to earn a good salary. He further advances that the teaching-learning process in Botswana's education system has been religiously geared towards drilling students to pass examinations by mastering factual information in a didactic style so that at the end of the day the learner can acquire a certificate and join the job market. Sadly, such a mythical belief that a qualification or a certificate leads to the obvious penetration of the job market is being proved to the contrary nowadays in Botswana since the country has both undergraduates and graduate degree holders who are roaming the streets scavenging for jobs. The diploma disease virus has caught up with the country.

Harber and Mncube (2009) contend that whenever schooling becomes centred on educating citizens to fit a certain designed social arrangement without necessarily empowering them to democratically exercise their consciousness independently-one way or the other such an education system is undemocratic, authoritarian and breeds undesired social attitudes which do not help the individual nor the nation at large. They further indicate that;

Genuine education cannot take place by directing or controlling what pupils think. If education is to help to form democratic citizens then this must take place in an educational environment where the skills, values and behaviours of democracy can be learned through participation in cooperative deliberation, shared enquiry and collective decision-making. (p. 34)

Nodding (2013) charges that education is supposed to be about teaching about democracy and participation whereby the learners are guided through critical deliberative thinking and dialogue and that in instances where learners are taught to the test, chances are that such an education system will fail to produce critical deliberative thinkers. Abdi and Richardson (2008) assert that as a cardinal principle, it is important to understand that the type of education which is supposed to sustain democracy must be democracy itself failing which it will only be seen to be maintaining democracy only for the dominant elites and the large populace would be robbed of possibilities for prospects of upward mobility that is supposed to improve their lives.

Hargreaves (2006) notes that;

A diploma, and more diplomas, is not enough. Even the educational employee, interviewed during research, who boasted 14 PhDs and 26 Masters degrees was still working for the bureaucracy on a minimum wage. Something about this education had not prepared him for what faced him now. (p. 164)

Any education system that is bureaucracy-oriented and fails to democratically and pragmatically empower citizens to survive independently after acquiring whatever qualifications, is an education

system which is deformed in quality and is likely to cause socio-economic and political misery to the citizens. There is an apparent increasing mismatch between the huge numbers of educated young people and the available job spaces in the labour market which consequently leads to the escalation of qualifications demanded for one to penetrate the job market and by extension such a scenario poses a lot of doubt especially regarding the quality of education especially in the Third World (Welch, 2000).

#### **4. Education and vocationalization: an alternative approach**

Many countries the world over have reconsidered their post-primary school curricula in the light of existing economic and social factors. The economic turbulence of the 1980s and the consequential crises of youth unemployment led to the belief that the development of vocational training programmes in schools could reduce unemployment and facilitate the transition from school to work for millions of school leavers. Traditionally, vocational education and training refers to studies in areas such as technology, applied sciences, agriculture, business studies, industrial studies and visual arts (Boateng, 2012). The argument for vocationalizing school curricula is that if youth who are to enter into the job market are well-equipped with employable skills, they will be able to function effectively in the world of work. Based on studies in Europe and the United States, Quintini and Manfredi (2009) wrote that there is evidence which suggests that students with vocational secondary school education enjoy a much smoother transition from school to work and have higher chances of getting both formal and informal employment. Such an endeavour would contribute towards finding a remedy for the diploma disease.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, educational initiatives that had the objective of providing employable skills to ease school-leaver unemployment became popular in many countries, for example, Workers Brigades in Ghana, Village Polytechnics in Kenya, Brigades in Botswana and Tanzania's Education for Self-Reliance (King & Parmer, 2007). Most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have formal, institutionalized vocational education and training at lower and upper secondary or post-secondary level, taking place mostly in parallel to general education (Biavaschi et al., 2013). The vocational education and training curricula in these countries emphasize the acquisition of employable skills that students need in order to get a job, perform on the job or keep the job (Anarfi & Appiah, 2012). This is necessitated by the fact that since employment opportunities in the formal sectors of many African countries are shrinking, it becomes imperative to equip students with vocational skills for wage employment and/or self-employment, hence gearing education towards self-sustaining production.

In Botswana, since independence, vocational education and training has been delivered at different levels in different types of institutions which include government-owned technical colleges, community-owned "brigades" the University of Botswana and private independent vocational schools (Republic of Botswana, 1977). The overall goals of general and vocational education in the country are to provide accessible, equitable and quality education leading to improved vocational and technical skills, employability and an adequate supply of skilled personnel. The provision of vocational education in post-primary education and training in Botswana is provided through two paths—through the general junior and senior secondary education under the Department of Secondary Education and through vocational and technical training under the Department of Vocational Education and Training. At both junior and senior secondary school levels vocational education is delivered in separate optional subjects such as Accounting, Home Economics, Agriculture, Business Studies, Computer Studies and Design and Technology. These subjects incorporate the acquisition of both academic and practical skills that help the students to transition into the world of work (Baliyan & Baliyan, 2013; Farstad, 2002; Republic of Botswana, 2002). However, despite such an attempt, the scourge of the diploma disease continues to devour the graduates.

The establishment of bodies such as the Botswana Training Authority (BOTA) in 2000 to reform, operationalize and monitor the vocational training system in the country and the Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in 2001, responsible for the planning and

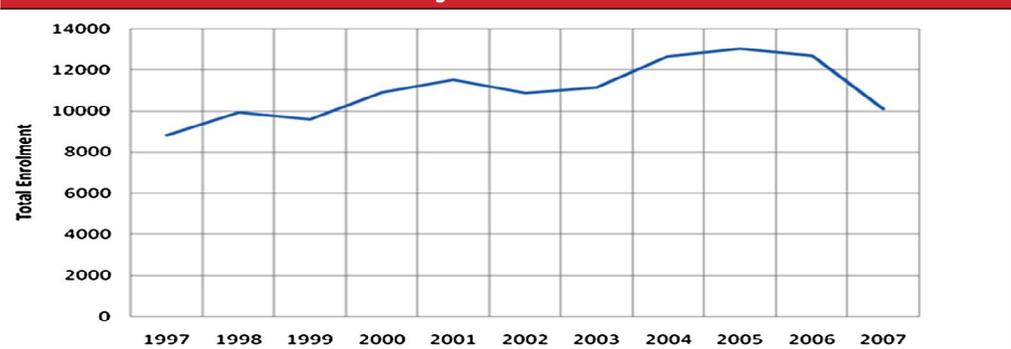
implementation of all institutional-based vocational programmes, led to increased post-secondary school access to training and a tremendous growth in the vocational sector especially in the private sector (UNESCO, 2012). The scenario is depicted in Table 1 below which shows the vocational and technical training enrolment numbers from 1997 to 2007:

From Table 1, it is evident that there has been a general increase in enrolment in post-secondary school vocational education and training. The relevance and effectiveness of learning in Botswana's post-secondary school vocational education in relation to employability were reported in tracer studies carried out by the BOTA. Respondents in the studies rated the skills they acquired from vocational training highly and more than 55% of employers expressed satisfaction with the quality of graduates produced Botswana Training Authority (2005, 2010).

There however appears to be need to align vocational education to the needs of commerce and industry. The results of tracer studies on the employment outcomes of vocational training graduates showed that unemployment is generally high among graduates of vocational training institutions where 49.55% of respondents in the sample used were unemployed and were looking for jobs (Botswana Training Authority, 2010). A study by Polelo (2007 cited in Mupimpila & Narayana, 2009) showed that, based on the results of the 2001 population census, graduates from vocational institutions and brigades had the second highest unemployment rate in the country. This high incidence of unemployment was attributed mainly to the mismatch of trainees' skills and those on demand in the labour market. There also is need for Botswana's technical and vocational education to respond to unemployment, particularly among the youth (Human Sciences Research Council, 2005) because they are the worst affected by unemployment. The country's unemployment rates are highest among the 15–19 year olds at 41%, followed by 20–24 year olds at 34%, as compared to 18% at the national level (UNICEF, 2012). Similar results were obtained in a survey on unemployment by training carried out by Statistics Botswana for the period 2009/2010 which showed that overall, unemployment rate in the country stood at 17.9%, with the youth registering the highest unemployment rate of 25.0%, compared with adults aged 36–64 years, with unemployment rate at 10.0% (Republic of Botswana, 2013). The survey also showed that the highest unemployment rate was among those with no training at 21%, followed by the category with Brigades certificate at 17.5%. Unemployment by training in Botswana for the year 2010 is summarized in Table 2.

According to Bogale (2014) the underlying reason for low participation rates of youth in gainful employment and entrepreneurial activities is the lack of quality and/or adequate skills. According to the Botswana National Human Resource Development Strategy of 2009, secondary school education does not prepare school leavers sufficiently for future career choice and it inadequately equips them for employment because of the lack of relevance of the curriculum to job market needs (Republic of Botswana, 2009). Nodding (2013) argues that citizens find themselves at such an embarrassing state of affairs because schools have suppressed democracy in the curriculum and have

**Table 1. Vocational and technical training enrolment in Botswana 1997–2007**



Source: Republic of Botswana (2011).

**Table 2. Unemployment Rates (%) by type/level of training 2010**

Training	Male	Female	Total
No training	17.1	25.0	21.0
Apprenticeship certificate	12.8	19.0	14.8
Brigade certificate	17.2	18.2	17.5
Vocational certificate	10.6	15.3	12.9
Education college certificate	10.6	9.3	9.9
University certificate	0.0	15.0	9.5
Other certificate	5.9	11.2	8.2
Vocational diploma	6.1	6.1	6.1
Education college diploma	2.1	4.7	3.7
University diploma	3.3	14.8	7.8
IHS diploma	6.7	1.6	2.8
Other diploma	6.9	4.4	5.8
University degree	4.9	4.9	4.7
Other degree	5.1	12.4	7.7
Not stated	12.7	16.8	14.7
Total	14.6	21.4	17.9

Source: Republic of Botswana (2013).

also stifled intellectualism by dwelling so much on examinations and tests which deny the learner critical thinking which is so much needed once they venture into the world of work.

The shortcomings of education, especially vocational education and training are not unique to Botswana. In the 1990s institution-based vocational education underwent severe criticism after it became apparent that it, in and of itself, does not create employment (King & Parmer, 2010) and decades of expanding formal vocational education at the secondary and post-secondary school levels in both developing and developed countries only helped to generate a huge young labour force equipped with basic skills yet unable to find a foothold in the local labour markets (Eichhorst et al. 2012). Studies in Sub-African countries have shown that the failure of vocational programmes can generally be attributed to low quality of training given to trainees, undue emphasis on theory rather than on skills acquisition and inadequate teacher training, obsolete training equipment and lack of instructional materials (Ajibola & Jumoke, 2012; Chakamba, Jumo, Edziwa, & Misodzi, 2013; Afeti 2010). In the words of Hargreaves (2006), diploma diseased graduates fail to penetrate the labour market because schools are now about examinations and prizes rather than equipping the learner with the skills to fend for themselves beyond the school boundaries.

Despite some of the setbacks outlined above, countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in particular have renewed and revitalized efforts to promote vocational education and training with the conviction that the formal development of skills can create jobs, enhance productivity and sustain competitiveness in the global economy (King, 2011; Onderi, Ajowi, & Malala, 2014). This is what pragmatic democratic education is about-whereby the schools are supposed to be flexible, move away from authoritarianism and seriously educate the learners by giving them a voice so that they become critical decision-makers within their own volition (Haber & Mncube, 2012).

## 5. Possible remedy: transformative business education

### 5.1. The youth and self-employment

Vocationalizing curricula as a means to successfully prepare individuals for wage employment or self-employment in a global economy is a challenge to educational practitioners and institutions.

We argue that vocationalizing curricula is necessary although it might not be a completely sufficient condition for preparing students for the world of work. Research studies (Kelly, 1986; Sifuna, 1986) indicate that mere vocationalization of the primary and secondary school curricula does not improve the employability of dropouts and school leavers. A study in Botswana, Kenya and Uganda by Farstad (2002) found out that very few students that received vocational and entrepreneurship education as part of junior secondary school (JSS) and/or senior secondary school (SSS) in the three countries, actually start their own businesses during the first 1–2 years after leaving school and that few young people leaving JSS and SSS possess knowledge and skills that could immediately be utilized for the production of goods or services that would be marketable. There is faith and hope however that vocational education could be the panacea for alleviating socio-economic conditions within the democratic Botswana's developmental state (Boikhutso, 1993).

Although some studies have indicated that there is widespread reluctance, scepticism or negative attitude to self-employment by young school leavers, Chigunta, Schnurr, James-Wilson, and Torres (2005) reported that attitudes of young people in Africa towards self-employment vary from country to country, mainly depending on economic, social, political and historical factors. Whereas many young people in South Africa see self-employment as a “stop-gap” measure as they look for formal employment, Chigunta (2002) revealed in a survey of Zambian youths that the majority of young people (51.5%) in his sample wanted to start their own business in the informal sector. In Ghana a survey of small-scale enterprises revealed that young people owned almost 40.0% of the enterprises (Osei, Baah-Nuakoh, Tutu, & Sowa, 1993). But younger youth aged 15–25 owned only 5.5% of enterprises, while those aged between 26–35 years owned 33.8%. An inference that can be drawn from the preceding discussion is that there are young people who have entrepreneurial intentions and this supports research (Lewis & Massey, 2003), which suggests that more young people nowadays are viewing entrepreneurship and self-employment as a work option. However, Schweisfurth et al. (2002) are quick to advise that in the process of educating citizens for empowerment it is crucially necessary that the educator should learn to listen to the voices of the learner by giving them the opportunity to express themselves so that we could develop the sensibility to identify the thought process underlying their world view. It is only that they can become productive in their society in their various little essential ways.

Surely there are young people out there who are optimistic about being personally successful in whatever they do and would one day want to venture into business. A survey in the UK by City and Guilds (2012) on the views of 3,000 children and young people aged 7–18 on education and employment found out that 42% of 14–16 year olds agreed with the statement “One day I would like to run my own business” and 25% actively disagreed. Among the 16–18 year olds, nearly half (49%) of respondents agreed that they would one day like to run their own business. These findings suggest that young people are indeed attracted to being entrepreneurs and should be afforded opportunities to channel their enthusiasm into a realistic understanding of the world of work.

We propose that to achieve this and to minimize the shortcomings of general vocational education and training, schools and vocational institutions should be encouraged to introduce democratic transformative business education in their curricula. If current offerings of vocational education at secondary and post-secondary school levels produce graduates that cannot be fully absorbed in the labour markets (perpetuation of the diarrhoea of the diploma disease), it may be high time curriculum planners infused compulsory business education with strong entrepreneurship education components into the curricula of all institutions. It has been reported that vocational education serves as an incentive for thousands to become entrepreneurs (Agada & Ekpa, 2007) and research work in municipalities in several African cities have demonstrated that employment for young people can be created by actively promoting micro-enterprises (Sasaki, 2006). Jotia (2013 cited in Jotia & Mokgosi, 2013) cements this argument by outlining that;

The promises of democracies, freedom and social justice for all under the global discourse can only be realized if the nation-states formulate education systems which are going to

address the challenges of the moment. Schools are expected to educate in a manner that will foster and trigger civic understanding. Civic education is seen as a panacea to many socio-economic and political ills that a society goes through (pp. 22–23).

### **5.2. Business and entrepreneurship education**

We will now digress a bit and focus on business education. Business education is generally perceived to be one of those major occupational areas of technical and vocational education. According to the US's National Business Education Association (2003), business education is provided to meet both the general education and career education needs of students by preparing them for entry and advancement in jobs in business. It prepares students to be productive workers and successful entrepreneurs. According to Amoor and Udoh (2008) business education helps to improve personal qualities and builds the attitudes of individuals that are necessary for adjustment to employment situations, and also provides knowledge, skills and competence for individuals to function well in business occupations and also create jobs for themselves and others.

A popular and innovative part of the business education curriculum that has grown in stature over the years is entrepreneurship education (Welsch, 1993). Entrepreneurship education is mainly concerned about preparing individuals to undertake the formation and operation of small business enterprises for self-employment. Entrepreneurship education focuses on equipping students with business and entrepreneurial skills. Business skills cover skills such as financial, marketing, operational, human resource, legal, communication, management and business plan compiling skills while the category of entrepreneurial skills covers skills such as creativity, risk-taking and opportunity identification (Van Vuuren & Nieman, 1999). Making reference to Dewey on the importance of democratic vocational education, Nodding (2013) notes that the only way of preparing citizens for occupation is to train them through occupation where praxis becomes real in the new industrialism.

We argue that business education and vocational education provide alternative routes to different goals which are equivalent, and these are self-employment and wage-employment. Because of their shared goals, business education can be viewed as an area in the field of vocational education and that the two are complementary. For this reason, they should be taught concurrently in schools and vocational institutions to all categories of students, business and non-business majors. Cheung and Chan (2011) argue that vocational institutes should provide students a chance to acquire business and entrepreneurial knowledge because they would have more confidence both in starting up a business and in working in business if they were equipped with such knowledge. Vocational education prepares students for opportunities, self-worth as well as the courage to pull and maintain them out of poverty (Abefe-Balogun & Nwakpa, 2013).

### **5.3. The need for democratic pedagogies**

This paper would be incomplete without briefly discussing the democratic and emancipatory teaching pedagogies that are recommended for teaching business and entrepreneurial skills. Spring (1994) charges that in order for students to escape pedagogies of oppression in our education systems, there is absolute need to use instructional methods which raise the level of human consciousness so that those living in oppression can transcend the boundaries of oppression. Brendel and Yengel (1972) add that methods of teaching such as the lecture, question and answer and drill are not conducive to the development of business ideas, concepts, understandings and attitudes because such methods only help students to learn about the theory of business without knowing how to apply that theory. Using traditional teaching methods such as lectures and direct instruction to develop practical business skills such as financial management, decision-making and enterprisingness is inappropriate and can be likened “to teaching someone to swim without a pool” (Sherman, Sebora, & Digman, 2008:1). The National Business Education Association (2004) believes that the most effective instructional strategies for business understanding should include case studies, cooperative and individual research projects, guest speakers, role play, debates, simulations, surveys and critical-thinking exercises for teaching global business concepts. Such pedagogies, Freire (1970) cited

**Table 3. What and how to teach in business and entrepreneurship education**

What to teach	How to teach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing entrepreneurial behaviours</li> <li>• Building self-confidence</li> <li>• Creativity, motivation and ability to solve problems</li> <li>• Business and financial skills</li> <li>• Building relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive, learner-centred pedagogies</li> <li>• Case studies, games, simulations and business plan competitions</li> <li>• Extensive use of visuals, digital tools and multimedia</li> <li>• Learning by doing and hands-on activities</li> <li>• Experiential learning</li> <li>• Projects</li> <li>• Interaction with entrepreneurs</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from World Economic Forum: *Educating the Next Wave of Entrepreneurs* (2009).

in Spring, 1994) argues that they will promote biophilic relationships as opposed to the necrophilic one whereby learners are alienated to a position of being “dead” receivers of knowledge who are just enslaved in the teacher’s world of intellectual domination. Democratic pedagogies challenge us to deconstruct relationships in the process and move to a situation where teachers and students shift from banking education pedagogical style to more robust and productive learner-centred pedagogies which repel the oppressive and irrelevant technicist approach to issues related to curriculum and pedagogy (Tabulawa, 2013).

Over the past century there has been a growing debate about how well educational systems prepare young people for adult life in general and “enterprise” in the world of work in particular. Because business and entrepreneurship are often associated with qualities, such as initiative, creativity and autonomy, several scholars argue that entrepreneurship should be taught in an active and experiential way, stimulating young people to systematically think and act entrepreneurially (Kuip & Verheul, 2003). Gibb and Cotton (1998) argue that to create enterprise awareness in students, emphasis should be on pedagogies “...that encourage learning by doing, by experience, by experiment, by risk taking and making mistakes, by creative problem solving, by feedback through social interaction; by role playing, by exploring role model; and by interaction with the adult world” (p. 11). An outline of “what” and “how” to teach using entrepreneurial pedagogies was outline by the World Economic Forum (2009:11) in its report on educating future entrepreneurs as reflected below in Table 3:

Regardless of the vocational training area, the most effective way to achieve these objectives is to have students participate in practical projects and activities, in which learning by doing is emphasized and real experience with entrepreneurship is gained. Last but not least, students must be taught how to draft business plans, in words of Freire-this is education as the practice of freedom. Education should prepare students through a style that promotes deliberative democratic virtues where critical thinking, moral reasoning, creativity, equality, freedom and social justice are allowed to flourish (Gutmann, 1999).

## 6. Conclusion

As a way of moving forward with a more democratic, transformative and pragmatic-oriented education system in the post-colonial Botswana, we vehemently usher the following recommendations as possible remedies to the current conservative and unempowering education system which fuels the problematic of the diploma disease among the graduates:

- Business Studies be made compulsory and not optional in junior and senior secondary schools.
- Mini enterprise projects be made compulsory at both junior and senior secondary school levels.
- Compulsory business and entrepreneurship education courses be offered in vocational training institutions.

- There be emphasis on deliberative democratic pedagogies that encourage learning: by doing; by exchange; by experiment; by risk taking and “positive” mistake making; by creative problem solving; by feedback through social interaction; by dramatizing and acting the part; by exploring role models and by interacting with the outside/adult world.
- The use of experiential and kinaesthetic teaching methods which replicate the “real life” business world be encouraged.
- The development of positive attitudes to self-employment and awareness of this career option be the first step in the process of providing a basis for income-generating activities to lower secondary school pupils.
- Both secondary school and TVET students should be exposed to real market processes and forces during business and entrepreneurship education courses, through the operation of student enterprises and work placements in TVET.
- Schools be opened to the outside world by inviting external experts—such as business people and entrepreneurs—to take part in teaching.
- Incorporate use of technology in teaching and learning.
- Above all, education institutions in Botswana should become humanizing spaces for democratic engagement where critical-thought is treasured so that the learner can autonomously embark on a liberatory and revolutionary thought process as they try to make the world a place for better possibilities.

#### Funding

The authors received no direct funding for this research.

#### Author details

Agreement Lathi Jotia<sup>1</sup>

E-mail: [agreementjotia@yahoo.com](mailto:agreementjotia@yahoo.com)

Burman Musa Sithole<sup>1</sup>

E-mail: [sitholeb@mopipi.ub.wj](mailto:sitholeb@mopipi.ub.wj)

<sup>1</sup> Department of Languages and Social Sciences Education, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana.

#### Citation information

Cite this article as: Pragmatizing democratic education in Botswana through business education: Countering the scourge of the diploma disease, Lathi Agreement Jotia & Burman Musa Sithole, *Cogent Education* (2016), 3: 1189482.

#### References

- Abdi, A. A., & Richardson, G. (2008). *Decolonizing democratic education: Trans-disciplinary dialogues*. Rotterdam: Sense.
- Abefe-Balogun, B., & Nwakpa, N. N. (2013). Tackling unemployment through vocational education. *Advances in Arts, Social Sciences and Education Research*, 2, 103–110.
- Afeti, G. (2010). *Technical and vocational education and training for industrialization*. Retrieved from <http://www.arforum.org/publication/occasional-papers/40/95-technical-andvocational-education-andtrainig-for-industrialisation.html>
- Agada, J. A., & Ekpa, A. B. (2007). Entrepreneurial development and national reforms. *Journal of Business Administration and Management*, 5 (1).
- Ajibola, Y. M., & Jumoke, S. (2012). Achieving sustainable economic development in Nigeria through technical and vocational education and training: The missing link. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 2, 71–77.
- Amoor, S. S., & Udoh, A. A. (2008). The role of secretarial education in Nigerian economic development. *Journal of Educational Research and Development*, 3, 294–298.
- Anarfi, J. K., & Appiah, E. N. (2012). *Skills defined by curricula: Sub-Saharan Africa*. Accra: Institute for Statistical, Social and Economic Research.
- Baliyan, S. P., & Baliyan, P. S. (2013). Institutions and organisations contributing to entrepreneurship education and skill development in Botswana. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 15, 198–213.
- Biavaschi, C., Eichhorst, W., Giulietti, C., Kendzia, M. J., Muravyev, A., Pieters, J., ... Zimmermann, K. F. (2013). *Youth unemployment and vocational training: World bank report*. Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labour.
- Boateng, C. (2012). Restructuring vocational and technical education in Ghana: The role of leadership development. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2, 108–114.
- Bogale, M. P. (2014). *Curbing unemployment in Africa (Botswana) by incorporating entrepreneurship training in the education system*. Retrieved June 5, 2014, from <http://afriperspectives.com/2014/03/21/entrepreneurship-training-botswana/>
- Boikhutso, K. (1993). Vocationalization of the school curriculum in Botswana (Unpublished masters degree thesis). Bristol: University of Bristol.
- Brendel, L., & Yengel, H. (1972). *Changing methods of teaching business subjects*. Washington, WA: National Business Education Association.
- Boikhutso, K. (2013). Botswana's social studies education programme and globalization: challenges for curriculum innovation and reform. In L. Z. Mokgosi & A. L. Jotia (Eds.), *Transforming curriculum for quality education and globalization challenges* (pp.1–21). Windhoek: Zebra Publishing.
- Botswana Training Authority. (2005). *Tracer study for vocational training graduates: Draft report*. Gaborone: BOTA.
- Botswana Training Authority. (2010). *Tracer study on the employment outcomes of the vocational training graduates*. Gaborone: BOTA.
- Brendel, L., & Yengel, H. (1972). *Changing methods of teaching business subjects*. Washington, WA: National Business Education Association.
- Byczkiewicz, V. (Ed.). (2014). *Democracy and education: Collected perspectives 2014*. Los Angeles: Trebol Press.

- Chakamba, J., Jumo, C., Edziwa, X., & Misodzi, C. (2013). The demise of technical subjects: The case of selected high schools in Harare, Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Education*, 5, 172–183.
- Cheung, C., & Chan, Y. C. R. (2011). The introduction of entrepreneurship education to school leavers in a vocational institute. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, 4, 8–16.
- Chigunta, F. (2002). *Youth entrepreneurship: Meeting the key policy challenges*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chigunta, F., Schnurr, J., James-Wilson, D., & Torres, V. (2005). *Being "Real" about youth entrepreneurship in eastern and southern Africa: Implications for adults, institutions and sector structures* (SEED Working Paper No. 72). Geneva: International Labour Organization.
- City and Guilds. (2012). *Ways into work: Views of children and young people on education and employment*. Retrieved June 6, 2014, from <http://www.cityandguilds.com/~media/Documents/aboutus/CityandGuildsWaysintoWorkViewsofYoungPeopleReportpdf.ashx>
- Dore, R. (1976). *The Diploma disease*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Eichhorst, W., Rodríguez-Planas, Núria, Schmid, Ricarda, & Zimmermann, Klaus F. (2012). *A Roadmap to Vocational Education and Training Systems around the World* (IZA Discussion Paper No. 7110). Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labour.
- Farstad, H. (2002). *Integrated entrepreneurship education in Botswana, Uganda and Kenya*. Oslo: National Institute of Technology.
- Francis, M. (1979). Public examinations and educational advance in Botswana. *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies*, 1(2), 1–20.
- Freire, P. (2006). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Gibb, A. A., & Cotton, J. (1998, December 8). *Entrepreneurship in schools and college education—creating the leading edge*. Background paper to the conference to be held at the Department of Trade and Industry Conference Centre. London.
- Gutmann, A. (1999). *Democratic education*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/9781400822911>
- Harber, C., & Mncube, V. (2009). *Education, democracy and development: Does education contribute to democratisation in developing countries?* Oxford: Symposium Books.
- Harber, C., & Mncube, V. S. (2012). Democracy, education and development: theory and reality. Other education. *The Journal of Educational Alternatives*, 1, 104–120.
- Hargreaves, E. (2006). The diploma disease in Egypt: Learning, teaching and the monster of secondary leaving certificates. *Assessment in Education*, 4, 161–176.
- Human Sciences Research Council. (2005). *Vocational education and training in Southern Africa: A comparative study*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Jotia, A. L. (2008a). Western education and the death of indigenous African identity. *Democracy and Education*, 17, 23–27.
- Jotia, A. L. (2008b). *Educating for deep democratic participation in the post-colonial Botswana*. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Muller.
- Jotia, A. L., & Mokgosi, L. Z. (2013). *Transforming curriculum for quality education and globalization challenges*. Windhoek: Zebra.
- Keane, J. (2009). *The life and death of democracy*. London: W.W. Norton.
- Kelly, M. J. (1986). *The provision of education for all: Towards the implementation of Zambia's educational reforms under demographic and economic constraints* (Educational reform implementation project). Lusaka: University of Zambia.
- King, K. (2011). *Eight proposals for a strengthened focus on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in the education for all (EFA) agenda*. Paris: UNESCO.
- King, K., & Parmer, R. (2007). *Technical and vocational skills development. DFID practice paper*. Retrieved May 22, 2014, from [http://www.unevoc.net/fileadmin/user\\_upload/docs/technical-vocationalDFID.pdf](http://www.unevoc.net/fileadmin/user_upload/docs/technical-vocationalDFID.pdf)
- King, K., & Parmer, R. (2010). *Planning for technical and vocational skills development*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Kuip, I., & Verheul, I. (2003). *Early development of entrepreneurial qualities: The role of initial education*. Rotterdam: Centre for Advanced Small Business Economics.
- Lewis, K., & Massey, C. (2003). *Youth entrepreneurship and government policy*. Retrieved June 6, 2014, from [http://sme-centre.massey.ac.nz/files/ICSB\\_03\\_Lewis.pdf](http://sme-centre.massey.ac.nz/files/ICSB_03_Lewis.pdf)
- Meyer, J. W., Nagel, J., & Snyder, W. Jr. (1993). The expansion of mass education in Botswana: Local and world society perspectives. *Comparative Education*, 37, 454–475.
- Mupimpila, C., & Narayana, N. (2009). The role of vocational education and technical training in economic growth: A case of Botswana. *International Journal of Education Economics and Development*, 1, 3–13.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJEED.2009.028935>
- National Business Education Association. (2003). *Effective methods of teaching business education in the 21st century*. Reston: NBEA.
- Nodding, N. (2013). *Education and democracy in the 21st century*. New York, NY: Teachers's College Press.
- Onderi, H., Ajowi, J., & Malala, G. (2014). Restructuring technical and vocational education and training (TVET) for sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research and Innovations*, 2, 40–45.
- Osei, B., Baah-Nuakoh, A., Tutu, K. A., & Sowa, N. K. (1993). Impact of structural adjustment on small-scale enterprises in Ghana. In A. H. J. Helmsing & T. H. Kolstee (Eds.), *Structural adjustment, financial policy and assistance programmes in Africa* (pp. 53–70). London: IT.
- Peterson, B. A. (2014). Nonviolent action as a necessary component in educating for democracy. *Democracy and Education*, 22(1), 1–7.
- Quintini, G., & Manfredi, T. (2009). *Going separate ways? School-to-work transitions in the United States and Europe* (OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Paper No. 90). Retrieved May 26, 2014, from [http://www.redetis.ipe.unesco.org/wpcontent/uploads/2013/07/Tef24quintini\\_going-separate-ways.pdf](http://www.redetis.ipe.unesco.org/wpcontent/uploads/2013/07/Tef24quintini_going-separate-ways.pdf)  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/221717700447>
- Republic of Botswana. (1977). *National commission on education*. Gaborone: Government Printers.
- Republic of Botswana. (1997). *National policy on vocational education and training*. Gaborone: Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Republic of Botswana. (2002). *Curriculum blueprint for senior secondary education programme*. Gaborone: Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation.
- Republic of Botswana. (2009). *National human resource development strategy: Realising our potentials*. Gaborone: Ministry of Education and Skills Development.
- Republic of Botswana. (2011). *Botswana statistical year book 2010*. Gaborone: Statistics Botswana.
- Republic of Botswana. (2013). *Botswana core welfare indicators survey 2009/10*. Gaborone: Statistics Botswana.
- Sasaki, S. (2006). *Promoting youth employment through entrepreneurship education*. Retrieved June 5, 2014, from [http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/beijing/download/speech/ss\\_18may06.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/beijing/download/speech/ss_18may06.pdf)
- Schweisfurth, M., Davies, L., & Harber, C. (2002). *Learning democracy and citizenship: International experiences*. Oxford: Symposium Books.

- Sherman, P. S., Sebor, T., & Digman, L.A. (2008). Experiential entrepreneurship in the classroom: Effects of teaching methods on entrepreneurial career choice intentions. *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education*. Retrieved June 6, 2014, from [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_6945/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_6945/)
- Sifuna, D. N. (1986). The vocational curriculum in primary education in Kenya: An evaluation. *Prospects*, 16, 125–134.
- Siphambe, H. K. (2000). Rates of return to education in Botswana. *Economics of Education Review*, 19, 291–300. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7757\(99\)00042-4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7757(99)00042-4)
- Spring, J. (1994). *Wheels in the head: Educational philosophies of authority, freedom, and culture from Socrates to Paulo Freire*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Spring, J. (2009). *Globalization of education: An introduction*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Stitzlein, S. M. (2012). Rethinking educational rights: Implications for philosophy and policy. *Educational Theory*, 62, 41–58.
- Tabulawa, R. (2013). *Teaching and learning in context: Why pedagogical reforms fail in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Tabulawa, R., & Pansiri, O. N. (2013). *Education in southern Africa*. London: Bloomsbury.
- UNESCO. (2012). *Promoting learning for the world of work*. Retrieved May 29, 2014, from <http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/worldtvtdatabase1.php?ct=BWA>
- UNICEF. (2012). *Botswana country report 2011*. New York, NY: UNICEF.
- Van Vuuren, J. J., & Nieman, G. H. (1999, June 20–23). Entrepreneurship education and training: A model for syllabi/curriculum development. *Proceedings of the 45th Conference of the International Council for Small Business (ICSB)*, Naples.
- Welch, A. (2000). *Quality and education*. New York, NY: Garland.
- Welsch, P. H. (1993, July 05–07). Entrepreneurship education and training infrastructure: External interventions in the classroom. *Proceedings of the IntEnt93 Conference*, Vienna.
- World Economic Forum. (2009). *Educating the next wave of entrepreneurs*. Geneva: World Economic Forum.



© 2016 The Author(s). This open access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) 4.0 license.

You are free to:

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format  
Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.  
The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Under the following terms:

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made.  
You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.  
No additional restrictions

You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.



**Cogent Education (ISSN: 2331-186X) is published by Cogent OA, part of Taylor & Francis Group.**

**Publishing with Cogent OA ensures:**

- Immediate, universal access to your article on publication
- High visibility and discoverability via the Cogent OA website as well as Taylor & Francis Online
- Download and citation statistics for your article
- Rapid online publication
- Input from, and dialog with, expert editors and editorial boards
- Retention of full copyright of your article
- Guaranteed legacy preservation of your article
- Discounts and waivers for authors in developing regions

**Submit your manuscript to a Cogent OA journal at [www.CogentOA.com](http://www.CogentOA.com)**

