



Working Across Practice Boundaries in Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic in South Africa

**UNESCO Institute for Lifelong
Learning (UIL) Global Network of
Learning Cities (GNLC) Webinar**

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Relational Agency (Ann Edwards, 2010)



- Respects history, but is focussed on the **working across practice boundaries** and **creating common knowledge through shared understanding** of the different motives of those collaborating, and going **forward together**
- Involves **specialised knowledge/ skills** over and above technical expertise
- Involves **understanding and engaging** with the motives of others
- Is useful **vertically** (in authority hierarchies) and **horizontally** (across units/ organisations)



Working Across Practice Boundaries in South Africa



- SA in 'Stage 5 Lockdown' from 27 March 2020 (From 1 May, in 'Stage 4' moving towards ' Stage 3' by end of May)
- President established a coordinating and advisory Committee the **National Covid-19 Command Council** – widely **consulted** SA government ministries, business, labour, civic organisations and local epidemiological experts and health professionals.
- Decisions guided by **extensive consultations with these stakeholders**, as well as international organisations such as WHO



Working Across Practice Boundaries in South Africa



- Ministry of Health working in **collaboration** with the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS) and Community Health Workers to roll-out testing + screening
- A **Solidarity Fund**, set up to support SA's response and raised over R2.7 billion from over 175,000 **individuals** and more than 1,500 **companies** and **foundations** (**Example of a united response in the face of a crisis**)



Schooling and Adult Education



- Schools, TVET Colleges, Community Education and Training Colleges and HEIs are currently closed in line with National State of Disaster and Lockdown Regulations



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

- Departments of Basic Education (DBE) and Higher Education and Training (DHET) made firm commitments towards ensuring the **continuity of education**



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Continuity of Schooling



Schooling – learner support programmes + partnerships

- Partnerships formed to offer comprehensive **learner support packages** for the schooling sector
- Support divided into six areas: **online learning, communication and dissemination, nutrition, health and hygiene, monitoring and evaluation, and teacher engagement**
- The **collaboration** “already yielded positive outcomes” with UN Children’s Fund, Heartlines (social change organisation), private sector companies, the SABC & DStv and four of South Africa’s network providers on board



**RELATIONAL EXPERTISE AND AGENCY USED TO
ACHIEVE A COMMON GOAL**

Continuity of Adult Education



- Resumption of teaching and learning to be staggered in accordance with revised academic calendar
- Priority to be given to adult learners doing the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (**GETC: ABET**) and the **Senior Certificate** to prepare for and write examination in Oct/Nov 2020
- Minister: HEST appealed to **faith based organisations, churches, traditional leaders, NGOs and community leaders** to engage with the Department and CET colleges to use their infrastructure for tuition and examinations (**Relational Agency** required here)

Working Across Practice Boundaries



- **The challenge: working on complex problems**
- **The relational turn : core ideas of relational expertise, relational agency, common knowledge**
- **Creating an infrastructure for building and using common knowledge at a site of intersecting practices**



Building and Using Common Knowledge at Sites of Intersecting Practices



- **Practices are shaped and taken forward by motives – and these motives shape how we interpret problems**
- **Common knowledge is made up of what matters for each practice (the motives) (Edwards 2010, 2011, 2012)**
- **Common knowledge mediates collaborations**

Building Common Knowledge



A three-stage process of building common knowledge at sites of intersecting practices

- i. Recognising similar long-term open goals, such as high quality education for all**
- ii. Revealing values and motives in the natural language of talk.**
- iii. Listening to, recognising and engaging with the values and motives of others. Asking for and giving reasons?**

Key Principles



“In conversation, I must know how to listen, I must know how to understand your point of view, I must learn to represent myself to the world and the other as you see them. If I cannot listen, if I cannot understand, and if I cannot represent, the conversation stops, develops into an argument, or maybe never gets started.”

(Benhabib, 1992, p. 52)

“What I propose is a.....a moral conversation in which the capacity to reverse perspectives, that is, the willingness to reason from the others’ point of view, and the sensitivity to hear their voice is paramount.”

(Benhabib, 1992, p. 8)