# Mainstreaming informality and access to land through collaborative design and teaching of aspects of a responsive planning curriculum at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology

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## Abstract

Access to urban land and resources and the pervasiveness of informality are perhaps the main cross-cutting features defining contemporary urbanism in the South, where the urbanisation of poverty is not only acute but where there is an increasing peripheralisation of the urban poor further from economic opportunities. A critical challenge is the emergence and persistence of informality and particularly the growth of informal settlements and the informal economy, and the nature of official responses to this growing phenomenon. Planning curricula and practices have been reactive, at best, to these challenges, and routinely tended to wish these realities away or treat them as temporary problems, at least in the short and medium term. The centrality of access to land is not necessarily the scarcity of land in itself, but what the land makes possible as the resource base, and therefore what benefits competing actors are able to derive from accessing well-located land in a city.

Against the backdrop of the regional context of urban informality and the historical dynamics of colonial planning legacies, this article argues that the curricula of planning schools should focus on local substantive contexts, and case studies, as well as on developing deeper and more sustained collaborations with local actors in implementing locally responsive curricula. The choice of thematic issues is strategic: informality and access to land are two critical issues of substance while collaborative design and teaching is a process issue, undergirding the value basis for/of planning. The latter, collaborative curriculum design and teaching, refers to a more deliberative engagement with context, substance and actors in an African planning environment in curriculum development, design, implementation as well as sourcing and developing learning materials that speak to local contexts. Planning education is an important lever in shifting into this needed strategic 'turn' in planning practices that demand a more sophisticated toolkit comprising of a balance of strategic, technical and tactical assemblage of tools.

## HOOFSTROMING VAN INFORMALITEIT EN TOEGANG TOT GROND DEUR MIDDEL VAN SAMEWERKENDE ONTWERP EN ONDERRIG VAN ASPEKTE VAN 'N DEELNEMENDE BEPLANNINGSKURRIKULUM BY DIE KAAPSE SKIEREILAND UNIVERSITEIT VAN TEGNOLOGIE

Toegang tot stedelike grond en hulpbronne en die verspreiding van informaliteit is waarskynlik die vernaamste kenmerke wat hedendaagse stedelikheid in the Suide definieer, waar verstedeliking van armoede nie slegs akuut is nie, maar waar die vestiging van arm gemeenskappe op die rand van stedelike gebiede 'n toenemende tendens is, weg vanaf ekonomiese geleenthede. 'n Kritieke uitdaging is die ontstaan en voortsetting van informaliteit, en spesifiek die groei van informele nedersettings en die informele ekonomie, sowel as die aard van amptelike reaksies op hierdie toenemende verskynsel. Beplanningskurrikulums en praktyke is ten beste reaktief op hierdie uitdagings, en is dikwels geneig om hierdie realiteite weg te wens of as tydelike probleem te beskou; ten minste op die kort- en mediumtermyn. Die sentraliteit van toegang tot grond is nie noodwendig die skaarsheid van grond self nie, maar wel wat die grond moontlik as 'n hulpbronbasis kan bied, en daarom watter voordele kompeterende rolspelers bereid is om van hierdie grond te verkry op die regte plek in 'n stad.

Teen die agtergrond van die streekskonteks van stedelike informaliteit en die geskiedkundige dinamiek van koloniale beplanningsnalatenskap, redeneer hierdie artikel dat die kurrikulums van beplanningskole meer op plaaslike inhoudskontekste en gevallestudies moet fokus, en dieper en meer volhoubare samewerking met plaaslike rolspelers moet ontwikkel met die implementering van kurrikulums wat plaaslik meer aanvaarbaar is. Die keuse van tematiese sake is strategies: informaliteit en toegang tot grond is twee kritieke sake, terwyl samewerkende ontwerp en onderrig prosessake is, wat onderliggend is aan die waardebasis vir/van beplanning. Hierdie saak, asook samewerkende kurrikulumontwerp en onderrig, handel oor 'n meer beraadslagende betrokkenheid by konteks, inhoud en rolspelers in 'n Afrika beplanningsomgewing in kurrikulumontwikkeling, ontwerp, implementering asook verkryging en ontwikkeling van leermateriaal oor plaaslike kontekste. Beplanningsonderrig is 'n belangrike rat in die skuiwing binne hierdie nodige strategiese draaipunt in beplanningspraktyke wat 'n meer gesofistikeerde hulpmiddel eis, bestaande uit 'n balans van strategie, sowel as tegniese en taktiese samevoeging van hulpmiddels.

## HO HLOKA BOTSITSO HO HOHOLO HO BA LE NAHA KA TSHEBEDISANO YA HO RALA LE HO RUTA KA DINTLHA TSA MORALO WA LENANE LA DITHUTO (KHARIKHULAMO) E IKARABELLANG MANE YUNIVESITHING YA TEKENOLOJI YA PENISULA YA KAPA (CAPE PENISULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY)

Ho ba le lefatshe kapa naha le mehlodi esitana le ho sa tsitsa ho batsi mohlomong e ka ba tsona dintho tse hlahelang tse hlalosang phallelo ya dibaka tsa metse ya ditoropo ya kgale ka leholakoreng la Borwa; moo phallelo ya bofuma ba dibaka tsa metse ya ditoropo e seng feela mpe, empa e le moo ho nang le keketseho ya meedi ya batho ba phelang metseng ya ditoropo ba futsanahileng ba leng hole le menyetla ya tsa moruo o sa tsitsang. Phepetso e matla ke yona ho hlahela le ho phehella ha ho hloka botsitso haholoholo kgolo ya dibaka tsa makeishene kapa tsa mekhukhu esitana le moruo o sa tsitsang, le sebopeho sa dikarabo tsa semmuso kgodumodumong ena ya kgolo. Moralo wa kharikhulamo le diphethahatso di bile le kameho diphepetsong tsena, mme hanyenyane tsa lakatsa ho lahla mathata ana kapa ho a tadima a le a nakwana feela; bonyane nakong e kgutshwanyane le e bohareng. Tabakgolo ya ho ba le lefatshe kapa yona naha ha se hakaalo ho sa be le naha kapa lefatshe ka boyona, empa hore na lefatshe lena le fana ka eng jwalo ka mohlodi wa motheo le hore na ke ditholwana dife tseo bahlodisane ba amehang ba kgonang ho di fumana ho tswa lefatsheng lena tulong e ntle motseng wa ditoropo. Ka ho wela tlase ha sebaka sa lebatowa la ho hloka botsitso ha dibaka tsa metse ya ditoropo esitana le diphetoho tsa nalane moralo o siilweng ke bokoloni, ditaba tsena di bolela hore lenane la dithuto la moralo wa dikolo le tlamehile ho tsepamisa mohopolo ditabeng tse tadimaneng le lehae, dithutong tsa thuto le ho ntshetsa pele ditshebedisano tse tebileng le tse kgolo le batho ba amehang phethahatsong ya karabelo ya kharikhulamo ya lehae. Kgetho ya ditema tsa ditaba e bewa ka leano: ho hloka botsitso le ho ba le naha ke ditaba tse pedi tse kgolo tse nang le moko ha letshwao la tshebedisano le ho ruta e le taba ya tshebetso, ho tlama bohlokwa ba moralo. Sena se sa tswa bolelwa mona, e leng tshebediso ya lenane la dithuto (kharikhulamo) ho rala le ho ruta e bua ka tshebetso e tlwaelehileng ya nnete e tsamaelanang, moko le batho ba amehang moralong wa tikoloho wa Afrika popong ya lenane la dithuto (kharikhulamo), moralo, phethahatso ekasitana le ho fana ka mehlodi le ho bopa disebediswa tse buang ka dintho tse tsamaelanang le tsa lehae. Moralo wa thuto ke setshehetsi sa bohlokwa ho kena leanong lena le hlokehang la "phetoho" diphethahatsong tsa moralo tse hlokang mokotlana wa disebediswa tsa boemo bo phahameng tse nang le botsitso ba leano, bothekeniki le disebediswa tse phuthilweng tsa sethekeniki.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Growing informality in the cities and regions of the continent persists not as a lifestyle or condition of choice, but rather as a survivalist (and sometimes innovative) response to the increasingly excluding rules of formality. These rules are continually crafted and mediated by rampant markets and bureaucratic hierarchies of the emergent govern-ance repertoires of globalisation and its networks (Beall & Fox, 2009: 98). Informality is at one level a symptom of the inability of urban economies to generate and (re)distribute wealth and jobs to all its citizens; and at another level, the failure of urban governance to release well-located and serviced land and the requisite social services to adequately house urban citizens. Both planning practice and planning educa-tion curricula are faced with challenges on how to respond to these emerging forms of African urbanisation.

In most Southern African countries, the rapid urbanisation processes initiated by a largely colonial settler capitalism and the relative 'recency' of decolonisation of the subcontinent have meant that the space economies of the region have been more wholly incorporated (or globalised) into the international system of late capitalism (Mkandawire, 1985; Wekwete, 1994). While the processes of decolonisation in the region assumed more protracted and violent nationalist struggles, the abilities and resilience of these 'settler economies' to absorb and ride-over the shocks and impacts of globalisation have often been weakened and un-dermined (Wekwete & Rambanapasi, 1994; Tapela, 2010). The breakdown and relaxation of urbanisation controls in the region unleashed urbanisation processes that challenged existing urban development management frameworks and practices, and created particular pressures on governments to accommodate increasing flows of migrants under conditions of shrinking urban economies and the growing challenges of globalisation. The greater challenge of these shifts in the substan-tive contexts of urbanisation processes has been the way in which practitioners in the profession have thought and responded, in theory and practice, in

shaping new discourses and practices of planning as a relevant activity and responsive practice. In this respect, planning education has become an important arena for transformation.

## 2. PLANNING EDUCATION LEGACIES

A critical challenge is the emergence and persistence of informality and particularly the growth of informal settle-ments and the informal economy, as well as the nature of official responses to this growing phenomenon. Given the generalised overview of the regional context of urban informality and the historical dynamics of settler colonial legacies of land, this article argues that the curricula of planning schools should focus on local substantive contexts and case studies, and develop deeper and more sustained collaborations with local actors in implementing locally responsive curricula. The curricula of most urban planning programmes in the region are, to a large extent, modelled around western planning programmes of the 1980s with limited contextual embedding. In some instances, these curricula of African planning schools have remained frozen in this unreality while urban development contexts, processes and agendas have signifi-cantly shifted.

The impact of these unresponsive planning education curricula to current planning challenges has perhaps been more pronounced in undergraduate planning programmes where the curriculum attempts to build on, and balance between content and context, substance, theory and praxis. With respect to planning programmes at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), this challenge is even greater owing to the more technical focus of the curriculum. Three programmes are currently offered: a three-year National Diploma, a one-year Bachelor of Technology and a two-year research Master's degree on a full-time basis.[1] Over the years there has been blurring between the balance of technical, conceptual and theoretical skills in response to the changing context and restructuring of tertiary education, in general, and the profession, in particu-lar. Thus the observation that:

(t)he re-curriculation of Town and Regional Planning courses offered at Technikons in the 1990s have resulted in a trend which tended to blur this theory-practice distinction: the National Diploma now incorporates more theoretical foundations than earlier, whilst the B.Tech. degree introduced in 1995 is heavily biased to-wards "the mastery of a basic theoretical substructure". One could further argue that by the very nature of the discipline, the balance between theory and practice (or substance and process) is always critical (Tapela, 2010: 21).

While this shift in the balance was significant in shaping the curriculum, the new millennium brought to the fore and crystallised the emerging challenges of urbanisation processes, ineffective planning responses and inadequacies of planning curricula (Frank, 2006).[2]

Traditionally, most planning curricula have been strong on the technical and spatial dimensions of planning. However, they have tended to have limited emphasis and understanding of land and property markets and the nature of struggles of land and access to the city or urban resources (Gasper, 1990). Fernanda Furtado's observation for Latin American urban planning curriculum is also quite pertinent for the situation in African planning schools (Furtado, 2008: 20):

> Our urban planning system and planning schools typically follow a spatial approach and normative traditions that es-sentially ignore land markets and their effects on urban form or the spatial structure of the built environment, as well as the impact of urban planning deci-sions on the functioning of the land market.

Nabeel Hamdi (1996) similarly notes that academic training for built-environment professionals do not prepare students adequately to deal with the challenges of exclusion, poverty, vulnerability, insecurity, violence, diminished social capital, within rights-based and partici-patory approaches to planning.

Elsewhere, I have highlighted some of the challenges facing planning education and educators in the context of Southern African urbanisation and

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1    See Tapela (2010) for a more detailed description of planning programmes at CPUT.

2    Following the WSSD conference held in Johannesburg in 2002 and its millennium development goals, as well as the ten years of South African democracy reviews, critical perspectives emerged that foregrounded the need for shifts at all three levels and coordinated at global, regional and national spatial scales.

evolving political economy (Tapela, 2010: 12):

> … (O)ne important planning education response is to recognise that the historical links between migration, labour control and town and regional planning practice were at the centre of a purposeful shaping of urban and regional spaces and therefore as the pendulum swung back with democratisation there is [the] need to rethink planning education in order to engender practices that are responsive, inclusive and sensitive … The planning educator therefore occupies a critical role at the interface of not only defining the problems more developmentally, (but) through framing more inclusive discourses and practices that can begin the roll-back [the frontiers] of poverty and make real the vision of shared growth and sustainable settlements and development.

It was also noted that at the broader intersection of planning theory, policy and practice relative to the lived experience of development practice, the focus of planning education programmes:

> should constantly interrogate planning and development praxis (including innovations in planning education needed) through theory-policy-practice discursive engagements with both changing external environments and internal dynamics in development agencies, particularly the state, as it remains the critical (if waning) locus for planning in the developing world (Tapela, 2010: 12).

The initial challenge initiated by the Association of African Planning Schools (AAPS) in 2008 was that "each AAPS planning school (was) to assess the relevance and competence of planning curricula relative to the challenges of African cities in the 21st century and the future demands this will place on the planning system" through a broader review of "the current state of planning education in Africa and the extent to which it is aligned with current realities and demands of African urban settlements" (Tapela, 2010: 113). It was noted that, in the late 1980s, in the South African context (Harrison, Todes & Watson, 2008), while the early agitation by academics, practitioners and civil society for more progressive and developmental planning discourses and agendas helped to reshape statutory, policy and institutional frameworks; contradictory outcomes of the current

status quo still result from the structural embedding of development policy on market fundamentals and uncritical embracement of globalisation.

## 3. CHOICE OF INFORMALITY, ACCESS TO LAND AND COLLABORATIVE CURRICULUM DESIGN AND TEACHING AS AN ENTRY POINT

Access to urban land and resources, and the pervasiveness of informality are perhaps the main cross-cutting features that define contemporary urbanism. Planning curricula and practice have tended to wish these realities away or treat them as temporary problems to be 'eradicated' or 'formalised' (Kamete, 2010), at least in the short or medium term. The centrality of access to land is not necessarily for the land in itself but for what the land makes possible as the resource base and therefore what benefits competing actors are able to derive from that land in well-located places in a city that tend to allow land users to extract greater profit. This delayed response sits uncomfortably with a general agreement that rapid urbanisation processes in the South, in general, and in African cities, in particular, have resulted in several critical challenges that include, among others:

- urbanisation of poverty in a context of urbanisation without growth;
- crisis of governance where policy and practice unresponsiveness occur in a context of increasing market failure (Pieterse, 2008);
- growth and permanence of informality across space;
- distorted urban land and property markets that exacerbate inequalities, poverty and access to land, and
- lagging, untransformed and weak legal and value frameworks for land-use management.

The choice of the title themes is strategic: informality and access to land are two critical issues of substance while collaborative design and teaching is a process issue, undergirding the value basis for/of planning. The latter, collaborative curriculum design and teaching, talks to a more deliberative engagement with context, substance and actors in an African planning environment in curriculum development, design, implementation as well as sourcing and developing of learning materials that

speak to local contexts. Although some collaboration has happened in the training of planners in African schools, it is the contention, in this instance, that this has not been deep and strategic enough, often involving casual and limited engagement of part-time lecturers and occasional studios with 'professionals in industry'. It is interesting that at the continental level AAPS mooted two similar collaborations, first with the Slum Dwellers International (AAPS, 2010) and later with WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising) (AAPS, 2011). Memoranda of Understanding signed with both, as well as such opportunities for deeper collaboration in crafting more responsive planning practices, curricula and training of reflexive practitioners are emerging.

The title of this article underscores and interrogates the possibility of forging a form of planning curriculum that actively collaborates with professional practitioners and stakeholders beyond mere teaching to a deeper engagement to leverage meaningful participation and healthier balance of collaboration with other actors involved in development (civil society, state and private sector) in shaping the design and implementation of a responsive planning curriculum and education. In the South African context, and in drawing from international discourses on development, the planning profession and planning education need to find relevance in exploring innovative ways of facilitating the more progressive constitutional provisions for up-scaling in riding the tensions with the protection of private property rights – the latter linked to exclusionary processes and consequences of globalisation. This will involve building critical (thinking) skills in both the planning academy and in practice, not only lamenting the efficacy of current urban development management instruments, but more proactively crafting new instruments, frameworks and institutional assemblies (based on constitutional values) that are more effective in fighting the evil problems of poverty and inequality, and unsustainable development paths.

Central to these issues is the need to develop frameworks for study, reflection and understanding the nature of urbanisation and therefore configuring interventions that address rather than deny these realities. As a starting point, these are cross-cutting issues that are embedded in contextual understanding

of the substance, but that also impact on how the profession prepares practitioners to respond to these challenges. Then there is the real challenge of how the transformation of current institutional and governance frameworks that accept and learn from the reality of the context realities of current urbanisation process and trends can happen. Associated with this shift is the contested formula for resource allocation that is increasingly exclusive and out of synch with the expanded political economies and ecologies of resource needs and priorities, and therefore allocation and utilisation. With respect to informality, we have expressed this inadequacy elsewhere as follows (Newaya & Tapela, 2010: 12):

> The persistence of the blindness to these conflicting rationalities between policy intents and the lived reality of the emerging role and pervasiveness of informality as a defining feature of livelihood support … is a major challenge for planners in crafting new, and adapting existing development and planning policies and strategies that talk to each other across sectors, places and time; and that leverage synergies between the formal and informal. In the first place, the spatiality of informality is multi-dimensional and fluid, in that it responds to and activates flows of 'resources' across places. Secondly, there has been a preoccupation with the physicality of informality and trying to formalise whatever is informal. Lastly, there is very limited understanding of, and tapping into the existing thick networks of social capital, resources and energy that drive informality in development interventions.

While there is international convergence that shifts in planning are necessary (Mattingly, 1998; Harrison, Todes & Watson, 2008; UNHSP, 2009), these need to happen at three levels: policy, practice and curriculum. Policy shifts have been uneven as international discourses cascaded to regional, national and local levels, and in the engagement with negotiating new legal and value frameworks that can shift practice. Practice and curriculum shifts have tended to be slower, mainly because these are dependent on each other and embedded in co-existing paradigms of thought, and often conflicting rationalities for practice. This article echoes the AAPS's contention that in 'revitalising planning education' (Tapela, 2010) an entry to shifting planning practice can be forged: first, by producing the kind of planning curriculum and graduates that are better prepared to handle the processes of rapid urbanisation on the continent and, secondly, that relevant and sufficient resources to address this context be generated. This places a great deal of responsibility on the planning academy to find innovative ways of shifting the discourse through strategic resourcing and actor collaboration in the design and implementation of planning education curricula. Informality cuts across land use and access, economic sectors and institutional and governance arrangements, and articulates with both the conflictual and synergetic relationships between formal and informal processes of urban development interactions (Simone, 2001; Hansen & Vaa, 2004), and therefore affords a strategic entry point for exploring the complexity of current urbanisation realities.

## 4. HOW THESE THEMES ARE CURRENTLY COVERED IN CPUT CURRICULUM

At CPUT, the diploma programme initially focused on the training of an assistant to the planning professional who sufficiently understood what constituted a technically defined role of a planner in creating 'orderly' urban development. The introduction of the one-year full-time or two-year part-time Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech.) in the mid-1990s was an attempt to shift this mostly technocratic planning curriculum and the diploma student toward a professional planner. More recently, the focus shifted to re-thinking the National Diploma (ND) curriculum to reflect a more balanced competency clustering that creates a better planning practitioner "than the purportedly inferior equivalent to a junior engineering technician" (Department of Town & Regional Planning, 2009: 11).

However, the current Bachelor of Technology programme is being phased out, as required by the Higher Education Qualification Framework (HEQF) (South Africa, 2007), to be replaced by the Advanced and Postgraduate Diplomas, one year full-time duration for each programme. The CPUT planning department's current curriculum review exercise is considering the option of recommending the following route as an initial phase in response to HEQF's requirements:

- The retention of the three-year National Diploma programme with an overhaul of the subject offering to be more responsive to identified professional needs and a re-curriculation of the second (experiential) year structure, outcomes and outputs.

- Overhaul of the content of the current Bachelor of Technology programme and its re-curriculation as a one-year full-time Advanced Diploma (AD).

- The introduction of a one-year Postgraduate Diploma (PgD) that will articulate more interactively with our research Master's degree programme that is currently undersubscribed.

In the transition, more experimentation with the current B.Tech. subject content will continue to focus on contemporary debates on policy and practice and embedding local contexts. Currently, there is no course which speaks specifically to all thematic areas, in substantive and procedural terms, mainly because of their cross-cutting nature. The challenge for curriculum design and implementation is to embed and develop a toolbox of textured understandings of these issues that thread through curricula at all years of study and is mainstreamed, and as explicit recognition of the contextual reality of current urbanisation processes on the continent.

The curricula of all three programmes currently offered is structured around four main competence clusters or constellations of courses that develop overlapping competencies, skills sets and embedded outcomes (see Table 1). While these structuring clusters are horizontally conceived, the challenge in curriculum design and implementation is to ensure integrating and realising vertical alignment of knowledge, skills and values across clusters and courses to enable planning graduates to engage innovatively with current planning and development problems. The balancing of these outcomes and competencies is expected to be reflected in the critical thinking (research) and planning design (conceptual thinking) skills that students are required to acquire, as well as their handling of the interface between theory and practice in addressing the ongoing contestations over allocation of urban resources within context-specific limitations or constraints.

Table 1:  Competency clustering of the courses in all programmes at CPUT

| Competency-based clusters | Competencies/skills sets | Description of embedded outcome |
|---|---|---|
| **Core Planning Curricula** (Theory and Practice) | Urbanisation, urban and spatial processes | Understanding strategic and synoptic dimensions and the interconnections between different facets of planning (social, economic, political processes) and how they inform spatial forms and processes |
|  | Planning theory, processes and practice |  |
| **Planning Design** (Planning Studios, Project Work and Portfolios) | Design theory and skills (both spatial and process) | Understanding the design process Aesthetic dimensions and design awareness |
| **Support/ Specialisations** | Environmental studies, urban and regional economics | Relating and developing specialist or interdisciplinary interest areas that impinge on and enrich planning theory and practice |
| **Technology, Communication Skills and Research\*** | IT applications, writing and graphic communication in planning | The use of information technology (CAD, GIS) and of the Internet) Problem definition, gathering alternatives and collaborative problem-solving Written, oral and graphic communications |
|  | Research: planning, data collection and analysis, policy analysis and writing skills | Orderly gathering of information and drawing of conclusions Communicating effectively using accepted reporting and discursive methods Contributing to an understanding of a planning problem and recommending possible and innovative solutions |

\* The 'Technology, Communication Skills and Research' cluster begins to split into two separate competency clusters 'Technology, Communication Skills' and 'Research' as students advance in their years of study, and fully fledged modules emerge.

## 5. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND RE-DESIGN

Conceptually, the framing of programmes and curricula hinges on two interactive axes that frame the Department's conception of a responsive planning education programme which entails constant engagement between discourse and praxis, and where the theory-practice interface that informs planning praxis constantly intersects with the substance or object of planning interventions comprising people (society) contestations over access to the resource base (space) to shape the built environment (see Figure 1). In this framework, in the Bachelor of Technology programme (year 4), the two modules, Community Studies 4 and Urban Development Management 4 (highlighted in Table 2), are anchored at the substantive society-space interface to explore the development discourses and power dynamics at play in accessing resources and their utilisation. With the proposed conversion of the B.Tech. into the Advanced Diploma, this shift will be consolidated into a curriculum restructuring where a fifth year (the Postgraduate Diploma) will have four semester-taught modules and a mini research dissertation.

In the process of designing the new programmes to replace the Bachelor of Technology degree curriculum at CPUT,

in line with the changes in the higher education landscape regarding qualification framework and mixes, this article presents a case for collaboration with practitioners in the design and teaching of two linked modules on *Community Studies 4 / Planning* and *Urban (Land) Development Management 4*. There has been experimentation over the past few years in teaching these courses, using case studies and seminars taught by staff in collaboration with local organisations such as Development Action Group (DAG) who have developed local approaches, expertise and solutions in these areas. This article focuses on the design and teaching of these two-semester long modules that deal with community engagement, dynamics and understanding livelihoods and networks, on the one hand, and the nature of urban land markets, and the efficacy of the institutions and management frameworks that interface the formal-informal manifestations of urban life, on the other.
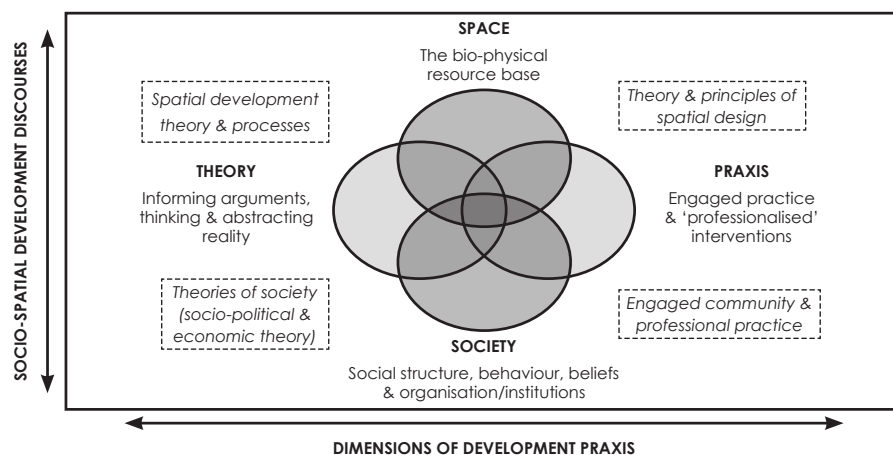


Figure 1: Conceptual framing of planning programmes and curricula at CPUT
Source:   Tapela 2010.

Table 2:  Mainstreaming informality and access to land in the current B.Tech. (4th year) curriculum

| Competency-based clusters | Semester 1 courses | Semester 2 courses |
|---|---|---|
| **Core Planning Curricula** (Theory and Practice) | Urban and Regional Planning Theory 4 (1) | Urban and Regional Planning Theory 4 (2) |
|  | Community Studies 4 | Urban development management 4 |
| **Planning Design** (Planning Studios, Project Work) | Urban Design Studio 4 (1) | Urban Design Studio 4 (2) |
| **Support/Specialisations** | Environmental Studies 4 (1), | Environmental Studies 4 (2), |
| **IT applications and Research in planning** (project-based training in data collection and writing skills) | Project Management 4 | Geographic Information Systems 4 |

## 5. TEACHING METHODOLOGIES AND IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1 Teaching materials and resources

Until recently, a frustrating problem in teaching African urbanism and planning has been the paucity of literature or perhaps the gaps in what little exists (Tapela, 1988). The assembly of adequate teaching materials becomes the first major hurdle relating to teaching and learning activities in addressing local contexts. The little that is there is scattered and often inaccessible in a context where African university libraries are poorly resourced, and research from African urbanists and planners is limited compared to other continents. There seems to be a slow revival in new publications (Inkoom, Ngau, Nnkya & Watson, 2010; Skinner, 2011) that reflect on African urbanism, as well as those that focus on the South African transition, making it possible to reconnect the planning curriculum to its context.

In addition, some organisations have developed and customised resource materials that address local African contexts. Notable among these are the Global Land Tool Network and UN-Habitat's Building Trust: Transparency in Land Administration Training Programme (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2012) and Urban LandMark & Un-Habitat's (2009) *Handbook on African Urban Land Markets*; both have excellent case studies that address local contexts. At the local context for Cape Town some NGOs have developed local expertise and case studies in community-driven urban development. At the local level, Cape Town-based NGOs such as Development Action Group have developed methodologies and course materials for training on access to land and land value capture instruments (Hendricks, Lee & Tonkin, 2010; Hendricks, 2010), as well as local expertise and case studies in community-driven urban development (Hendricks *et al.*, 2010; Hendricks, 2010). Isandla Institute has dealt with local government and HIV/AIDS in the city (Smith, 2007). In addition, there are the 'State of Cities' reports (South African Cities Network, 2011; UN-Habitat, 2008; 2010) that cascade from global, regional, and national to specific cities.[3] It becomes possible to confront fossilised official orthodoxies that characterise planning practices with intellectual activism in the classroom to challenge and help shift the outdated assumptions that underpin these paradigms. It is perhaps at these grassroot levels and addressing local contexts that new planning practices interact with planning education (live classrooms) when new possibilities for innovative and responsive practices can emerge.

### 5.2 The question of values

The technical orientation of planning programmes offered at Universities of Technology is exacerbated by the almost total absence of social science disciplines which often supplement or boost planning literature in embedding understandings of social theory when engaging with development issues (Gasper, 1990). Frank (2006: 3) captures an emerging dialectic and context that has and continues to shape planning education in the continent and region:

> Individual schools of planning developed and adopted a range of different foci and emphases over the last century, including a knowledge-based social science model; a design-oriented physical planning approach; and most recently, radical critique and advocacy…. Recent significant changes in professional planning practice and the changing climate of Higher Education have, and are requiring, a rethinking of planning education, its curricula, and its relationship with other disciplines.

Amankwah-Ayeh's (1995) early bold and harsh critique of Harrison's (1995) subtle caution against the worth of 'a design-oriented physical planning approach' signalled a growing formal debunking of the technicist/technocratic thrust and orientation of planning. In many ways, this orientation defined planning as a legitimating profession and therefore a critical implementation agent of apartheid planning and racialised capitalism.

The two modules outlined in Table 3 above deal with material that confront comfort zones of individuals and groups in a classroom situation, and brings to the fore the value bases of planning as a discipline and profession. Issues of power, poverty, inequality, forms of exclusion, identities, difference and otherness, are brought in through case studies and students working in groups to think through implications of these for current planning practice. Each of the modules involves a common assignment, in addition to a formal short essay, writing test and examination:

- a five-page review of two or more papers dealing with the same issue but with different takes on the issue, and

- a critical review of a specific project, development initiative or strategy related to a topic covered in the course with a view to develop alternative ways of thinking and action.

The value of this approach is to foreground the complexity of planning challenges and the need to understand context, and to experiment with alternative concepts and solutions. For instance, several B.Tech. students proposed the idea that the Department should design their 'stall' for Open Day (a glossy three-day event where university departments mount a glitzy display of their programme offerings and market them to the public – mostly attended by prospective high school students and their parents/guardians) as a shack, since shacks are 'home' to a significant 40 per cent of households in Cape Town. This was a bold suggestion that accepted informality as a norm but caused some anxieties in the Department regarding whether we were going to 'attract' or 'repel' prospective students by selling the Department as dealing with such 'un-sexy' issues as shacks, and not the glamour of designing global shopping centres. There was no noticeable change in attendance or interest from the previous two years as parents and students flocked to our stall. The risk we took was important at two levels: first, this was a public debunking of the technocratic orientation of planning and, secondly, we were becoming bold in what type of students we were trying to attract – therefore embracing the role of planning schools as intellectual activists that can lead paradigmatic shifts. It may just have been a dare, but perhaps this was a grudging acknowledgement that 'informal is normal' (Kamete, 2010).

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3 Operating from Cape Town, the African Centre for Cities at the University of Cape Town (currently hosting AAPS), and the Sustainability Institute at the University of Stellenbosch, among many other national and regional centres, have contributed significantly to local, national and continental publications in African urbanism, making planning education and practice much easier than a decade or so ago.

Table 3: Synopsis of learning outcomes, objectives of selected B.Tech. course contents

| Course name | Course learning outcomes and objectives | Course content outline |
|---|---|---|
| Community Studies 4 (one semester duration) | • Understand contemporary discourses in planning that put community planning (citizenship, identities, difference and the need for participation) at the centre of planning practice<br>• Develop awareness of the effects of globalisation and local responses thereto (and the implications for contemporary planning practice)<br>• Assess the changing role of the planning professional from a preoccupation with development controls to the need for development facilitation and mediation<br>• Understand the forces that shape the urban economy: its spatial structure and location of economic activity<br>• Understand entrepreneurship and the different variations of local economic development (LED) and regeneration strategies, including informality<br>• Develop research and development solutions that demonstrate deeper understanding of household and community dynamics and livelihoods and their contexts<br>• Write and communicate persuasively, particularly integrating the socio-economic, political, cultural and spatial domains of development | **Part 1: Society, Planning Discourses & Community Development**<br>• Bases of community development in a globalising world (power, poverty and inequality; globalisation and local responses; forms of exclusion: identities, difference and otherness)<br>• Sustainable livelihood approaches and networks: (poverty and development (poverty eradication/alleviation/reduction); community development and participatory planning) institutional and governance contexts (constitutional and local governance contexts; governance strategies: networks hierarchies and markets; partnerships, agency and networks (role of state, NGOs and CBOs)<br>• Community participation, empowerment and leadership<br>**Part 2: Local Economic Development: Policy and Practice**<br>• History, theory and practice of LED as a planning intervention (international, regional and local contexts; classification of LED strategies)<br>• Selling place or empowering communities: policy and practice<br>• Implementing LED: the South African experience<br>• Case studies: case studies in market-led development and entrepreneurship; accessing rights to land, shelter and sustainable livelihoods; LED research, strategy and project planning<br>• Community planning and LED research, development policy and practice implications |
| Urban Development Management 4 (One semester duration) | • Develop a critical understanding of the role of law in development management. This is not a course in planning law but explores the relationship between the intents of law and the development process and its management, or what is often referred to as development law<br>• Explore a wide variety of urban development management policies and the strategies and instruments available to manage urban development, their efficacy and alternative approaches<br>• Explore the intricacies in the interface between urban (and regional) planning and development management through the exploration best practice in urban development management<br>• Develop a more sophisticated understanding of urban (and regional) policy formulation and analysis, strategy development and implementation of programmes and projects, their packaging and financing, and the problems and processes associated with these<br>• Develop students' awareness of the need and capabilities to engage in research in these issues as a critical aspect of professional practice, growth and the embeddedness of research in planning praxis | **Part 1: Planning as a tool for Development Management**<br>• Legitimacy, mandates and emerging approaches for urban and regional development management<br>• Emerging approaches and legitimacy for urban and regional planning<br>• Contextualising development and planning processes and system in the South African context<br>• Development law and development management: (ideologies of planning law; 'rule of law' or 'rights-based approaches' to development) political, institutional and governance frameworks for urban management in South Africa (the developmental state urban development partnerships, coalitions and regimes)<br>**Part 2: Responding to conditions, processes and markets**<br>• Planning policy frameworks and development management instruments (policy and praxis; strategies and programmes; plans and projects; planning for the productive, inclusive, creative and sustainable city)<br>• Urban processes (speculation and sprawl; blight and gentrification; markets and informalisation)<br>• Urban land markets, economics and theory<br>• Urban land and property markets work for equity<br>• Strategic use of innovative land management instruments ('carrots and/or stick'), land value capture, land banking, inclusionary housing<br>• Urban development management research issues |

## 5.3 Role playing and shared facilitation

Resourcefulness in teaching and learning does not only rest with the quality of learning materials we use but also on the active involvement of and collaboration with other actors, including the learners themselves. The Bachelor of Technology programme attracts both 'freshers' (recent graduates) from the National Diploma programme and a few mid-career working practitioners. This mix often transforms the classroom into latent role-playing dynamics where the latter group often find it difficult to take off their 'working hats', and the 'freshers' look up to the 'wisdom and experience' of those in industry – even though they may be misplaced. Getting learners to think 'out of the box' is initially fraught with difficulty of protecting vested interests, unquestioned value frames and shifting focus on process and product of planning activity. There is a continuous need for careful use of this dynamic of latent role playing to create robust debate and learning.

The use of guest speakers and other resource persons in co-delivery of parts of the module is another resource the Department uses to implement the curriculum. This includes 'specialists' in different fields and activists who are involved in particular projects, programmes and initiatives that bring context-specific cases for students to learn from. The Department collaborates with the Development Action Group where parts of the modules are facilitated by their staff, as well as using their case study materials and the communities they partner on projects and sites. The course shape, content and mode of teaching and learning are being restructured and packaged to shift the balance between knowledge, skill and value components of both embedded and exit-level competences to the extent that this initiative is beginning to inform the design of a curriculum where:

• courses in the same semester are synergised in the form of joint assessments, and

• different course leaders actively collaborate with each other and with other practitioners to proactively cascade exit outcomes of one

set of modules to create a next set for the following semester, as well as write up these experiences as teaching and learning initiatives and inputs for curriculum revisions.

In redesigning the reconstituted post-B. Tech. programmes and qualifications that envisage 18 months of coursework and six months of research dissertation, the Department has co-opted some of these actors to participate in shaping the curriculum in the form of either an advisory board or competency cluster specialists.

## 6.  CONCLUSION

The brief review of the curricula and teaching of the two courses initiative is part of a more strategic conversation the CPUT planning department has been having internally, and with faculty and the planning professionals in practice in relation to benchmarking our own relevance to changing contexts as well as responding to the unfolding restructuring of the higher education sector. While this may seem a straightforward issue of curriculum redesign and development, for the CPUT planning school (and possibly other Universities of Technology), there is a more fundamental strategic issue of viability and relevance at play and, therefore, the need for ensuring that planning graduates are equipped to deal with new challenges.

International debates and policy recommendations emerging from these, increasingly acknowledge that urban development practice needs to shift from a preoccupation with 'formalising the informal' or 'eradicating informal settlements' and the delivery of full services, to a passive citizenry at standards that are increasingly unsustainable and replicable, to ideas of facilitating development in the form of supporting livelihood strategies and existing social capital in the lived reality of urban communities and households. These dualities point to unresolved co-existence of conflicting paradigms in which the planning profession and practice continue to be trapped. Paradigm shifts, according to Thomas Kuhn (1970: 70), occur:

> ... [w]hen ... the profession can no longer evade anomalies that subvert the existing tradition of scientific practice – then begin investigations that lead the profession at last to a set of new commitments, a new basis for the practice of science. The

extra-ordinary episodes in which that shift in professional commitments occurs are ... known ... as scientific revolutions. They are the tradition-shattering complements to tradition-bound activity of normal science.

Kuhn further suggests that this shift of professional commitments or focus (scientific revolutions) "necessitated the communities (i.e. practitioners) rejection of one-time honoured scientific theory in favour of another incompatible with it" (Kuhn, 1970: 6). The one-time honoured scientific theories he refers to as paradigms are the "locus of professional commitment" within which professional practice and research have their philosophical and body theory base (Kuhn, 1970: 12). These transformations of paradigms "are scientific revolutions, and successive transition from one to another via revolution is the usual developmental pattern of mature science" (Kuhn, 1970: 10).

Kuhn's observations related to the development of professional practice in the natural sciences; however, there are parallels with the planning discipline in that the inadequacies of urban planning, as practised under the rational-comprehensive public-interest paradigms or assumptions of planning as a technical and apolitical activity, were, for instance, completely de-bunked (Gasper, 1990). In other words, as voices for change have been getting louder in the past few decades, the 'revolution', in the Kuhnian sense, is yet to occur, and the classroom is one major site of this struggle. Such voices were rising at the 2010 Planning Africa Conference where Kamete (2010: 8) in a paper entitled *'Missing the point? Normalising 'pathological spaces' in urban Africa'* cynically summed planning's obsession with 'normalising' urban spaces perceived as 'pathologies' thus:

> Whereas this might be the time to seriously link informality to the great debates on inclusiveness, governance, pro-poor policies, enablement and participation, it should also be the time to revisit the whole reasoning behind the official standards of normality in livelihood practices. Maybe this is the time to seriously ask if it is still a good idea to continue investing in disciplinary techniques concerned with "normalising the population at large" … in favour of ways of generating livelihoods that are in the minority and that are accessible to only a privileged few. Maybe in urban SSA [sub-Saharan Africa] this is surely the time to normalise

rational modernist planning. It just might be the pathology.

The persistence of informality and complexities in accessing well-located land in African cities are critical 'pathologies' of contemporary urbanisation processes where the urbanisation of poverty is not only acute but the increasing peripheralisation of the urban poor further from economic opportunities is also prevalent. The result is a consolidation of the twin problems of poverty and inequality that threaten the very sustainability pillars of the political economies and ecologies of African cities. Unless planning as an activity begins to respond more innovatively to these challenges, it risks becoming irrelevant. Planning education is an important lever to shift this needed strategic turn in practices that demand a more sophisticated toolkit comprising of a balance of strategic, technical and tactical assemblage of tools.

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