

## I. Nell

Prof. I. Nell, Practical  
Theology and Missiology,  
Stellenbosch University,  
South Africa.

E-mail: [ianell@sun.ac.za](mailto:ianell@sun.ac.za),  
ORCID: [https://orcid.  
org/0000-0003-0007-8564](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0007-8564)

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# Embodied and hybrid pedagogies: Ecumenical tours as a case in point<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*This article aims to explore ecumenical tours as one example of glocal learning and as a case in point. Making use of the central concepts of embodied and hybrid pedagogies as hermeneutical lenses, the main research question is: Does the exposure of students through ecumenical tours, as part of the Master of Divinity programme, foster embodied and hybrid pedagogies, and if so, in what ways? Factors at play in ecumenical exposure include the content of the programme, the diversity of the student population, as well as the reflective and participatory practices of teaching, learning, and assessing in lived faith contexts. The article especially emphasises a one-day pilgrimage among the lived faith practices.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

I have known Kobus Schoeman for exactly 40 years this year. Our connection goes back to our student years when he graduated from the Faculty of Theology at the University of the Free State two years before I did. We share a common love for congregations and students



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1 Paper delivered at the second symposium of the project *Teaching and learning in crisis*. The project is a combined project between three universities, including NLA University College (Bergen, Norway), Stellenbosch University (South Africa), and PAC University (Nairobi, Kenya). TLC Symposium NLA University College, 28-29 March 2023, Bergen, Norway. Theme: "Teaching and learning towards change in times of crisis".

who study congregations. For the past nearly 20 years, Kobus and I have had the same responsibilities and research interests at our respective universities. We were mainly responsible for postgraduate students who were preparing for parish ministry. I once visited Kobus and his colleagues in Bloemfontein on an ecumenical tour with students and attended many practical theological conferences with him. Apart from being colleagues, we also became good friends and I often resided at his place when I visited Bloemfontein. I dedicate this contribution to him as it reflects on different pedagogies with ecumenical tours as a case in point.

Embodied and hybrid pedagogies is becoming a very significant part of the educational pedagogy at Stellenbosch University relating to the personal, vocational, and civic lives of students and lecturers. These pedagogies centre around reflective and critical thinking on what to teach, learn, and assess. These pedagogies also align with the focus of our Teaching and Learning in Crisis (TLC) project on *glocal learning* – in other words, developing a mutual and global learning within the framework of local learning communities in South Africa, Norway, and Kenya.

This article aims to explore ecumenical tours as one example of glocal learning and as a case in point. Making use of the central concepts of embodied and hybrid pedagogies as hermeneutical lenses, the main research question is: Does the exposure of students through ecumenical tours, as part of the Master of Divinity programme, foster embodied and hybrid pedagogies, and if so, in what ways? Factors at play in ecumenical exposure include the content of the programme, the diversity of the student population, as well as the reflective and participatory practices of teaching, learning, and assessing in lived faith contexts. The article especially emphasises a one-day pilgrimage among the lived faith practices.

The purpose of the article is, therefore, to investigate one component of this specific programme and to see whether, and in what ways, embodied and hybrid pedagogies are embedded and fostered through the different aspects of ecumenical exposure. The research is conducted against the backdrop of the symposium theme, *Teaching and learning towards change in times of crisis*, and links to one aim of the project, *i.e.* to address the challenge of youth citizenship in times of crisis. It is hoped that my research can also contribute to best-practice research on our joint educational activities of co-teaching and curriculum development. I further hope to develop some theoretical insights into the study of theology in a shifting, glocal learning environment facing a multitude of crises.

## 2. A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ECUMENICAL TOURS

Before paying attention to embodied and hybrid pedagogies, it is important to establish the origin and motive for the foundation of the ecumenical tours. According to Anthonissen (2013), the origin and purpose of the ecumenical tours are related to several aspects. The idea of the tours developed as part of what Anthonissen (2013:373) describes as “an element of social and political necessity”. During the 1980s, the vast majority of White Afrikaners were in isolation, resulting in them having no experience of the struggle, pain, and suffering of their Black compatriots. The lack of this experience gave rise to a need to take students on a journey that led them away from the isolated familiar environment and to venture into the unknown to meet new people in new environments. The aim was to help them overcome their own prejudices and hear stories they had never heard of before. It was hoped that these experiences and exposure would also help the students experience something of a liberation from their own circumstances.

The people who initiated the tours believed that, without first-hand exposure to the larger realities of South African society, the spiritual and educational development of the students cannot reach its full potential. The direct result of the latter was that the students would not be prepared and competent to deal with the challenges of their time. Anthonissen (2013:374) “saw this as an urgent and significant part of my pastoral and prophetic responsibility as a minister to students”.

The organisers thus opined that the future generations of theological students would live in a completely different South Africa from the one in which they grew up. What has happened since 1994 shows that they were absolutely right in their beliefs. In other words, the most important purpose of the tours was to introduce these young students to the world of poverty, the world of the marginalised which includes a whole generation of people with very limited opportunities in terms of accommodation, education, employment, and leisure activities.

According to the testimony of Anthonissen (2013:373), the tours were life-changing for the participants. The students could not help but take note of, and experience first-hand what the cruelty of apartheid did to people and the incredible suffering as a result of this policy. Without the students realising it, they crossed several borders into areas from which it was difficult to return. Many of the students testified that the ten days, which the tours usually last, broadened their horizons in a dramatic way and very often this led to all kinds of crises and conflicts with their own

congregations, However, the experiences also gave them fresh perspectives and held out new hope. The following comment serves as an illustration:

They discovered the dangerous and often misleading power of perceptions and how perceptions, gained second-hand, can strengthen and enforce enemy images which do not always accord with reality. They learnt that, due to indoctrination and social conditioning, what they had taken to be normal, was often viewed by others as a totally abnormal state of affairs. They discovered that the majority of blacks in the country did not hate their white oppressors, but were extremely gracious, hospitable and forgiving. Just a small sign of interest or of reaching out would almost immediately draw a smile and remove boundaries. They discovered this is the real and continuing miracle of South Africa (Anthonissen 2013:380).

According to Anthonissen (2013:375), most of the seven tours that took place from 1984 to 1991 were in the Johannesburg-Pretoria area, except for one tour through Lesotho on the way to KwaZulu-Natal. These tours also served as inspiration for other similar tours including a visit by several lecturers from the Faculty of Theology at the University of Stellenbosch during 1986. Since then, the tours have become a permanent institution of the Faculty of Theology and I have personally been annually involved in all of the tours since 2009. I also try to make each new group aware of the origin of the tour. In the meantime, I have also developed a basic pedagogy for the students to be discussed further.

It is clear from this short history of the ecumenical tours that one can already detect the contours of embodied and hybrid pedagogies. Aspects such as exposure, compassion, listening, experience, as well as reflective and critical thinking can already be discovered in this short narrative. This will be discussed further in the next section.

### **3. EMBODIED AND HYBRID PEDAGOGIES**

When I refer to embodiment in this contribution, it is within the context of the so-called post-modern rediscovery of the body. The body as a construction of our identity and as a reference point for our existence found a new interest in recent discourses on education and learning. Our bodies are, in a certain sense, the anchor of our existence, not only in terms of the fact that they need to be fed daily or that they determine our appearance, but also in terms of the public expression that we are somebody and not only some-one (Cilliers 2007:9).

However, if one looks at the embodiment from a theological perspective, it is a case that scholars agree with each other that the so-called anthropological turn since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century shows more agreement with the biblical, specifically with the Semitic anthropology, than with the Greek Hellenistic understanding of the body. From this theological starting point, the body itself becomes the interpretation of the action of a person. It also proverbially means that I am a body and I do not simply have a body. God, therefore, reveals Godself sensuously, not only through one or two senses, but also through all of them (Lukken 1990:6-7).

Caputo (1993:131) distinguishes between what he views as “philosophy’s body” (demonstrated via the ancient philosophers in healthy, active, athletic, male, White bodies) and the “distorted body” of lame and cripple people that one often finds in Paul’s anthropology and that contrasts with the “perfect body” of the classical paradigm. Caputo (1993:131) expresses this movingly:

... by flesh let us signify everything that is both vulnerable or able to be wounded, which means bent, cut, lacerated, ulcerated, withered, inflamed, paralyzed, numbed, or finally killed, but also healed, bound up, made comfortable and fed, and able to enjoy jouissance. These bodies of flesh are attracted to Jesus by an almost natural gravitational pull, and he seems literally to be swarmed by them: they brought to him everybody like that ... Surely this is a case of like attracting like, because in the end Jesus ends up as one of these bodies. The one who has become flesh becomes the most famous case of vulnerable, crucified flesh (which is also transformed and transfigured).

In my opinion, one of the best illustrations of what is meant by an embodied pedagogy can be found in the work of Le Grange (2004) in an article entitled “Embodiment, social practice, and environmental education: Some thoughts”. In the article, he convincingly points out that, in Western philosophy, the body is often despised and neglected and that the roots of the body-mind split are found in the dualistic processes of reasoning whose origins can be found in Greek philosophy. The body-mind distinction was further strengthened by the scientific revolution of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and this dualistic reasoning is also partially responsible for the global environmental crises, including climate change (Le Grange 2004:387).

Le Grange (2004:390) discusses three approaches to education – about, in and for – and considers these three in accordance with three ideological positions: neo-classical/vocational, liberal progressive, and social critical. Without discussing the other two in this article, I am particularly interested in the last one, as I believe it has the most value for what I have in mind with my own research. In my opinion, this social-critical approach also does justice to education for the environment because it holds together embodiment and social praxis. The latter is, according to Le Grange (2004:391), an approach that engages environmental issues and the climate crisis in and through action:

It disrupts the theory-practice and mind-binaries, since thinking and doing become one activity. Teachers and school learners (and other community members) engage with local environmental problems by actively and collaboratively investigating them in attempts to understand and solve them. Central to this approach is the interaction between bodies, that is, the establishment of social relations in efforts to change socio-ecological conditions. Corporeal presence is an essential element of social action aimed at addressing environmental problems.

In a more recent contribution, as part of a comprehensive process of “visual redress at Stellenbosch University”, Costandius (Fataar & Costandius 2021:108) also discusses the importance of embodied learning:

What became more prominent in my own learning processes in the last two years was the importance of embodied learning and the affective reaction of the body in relation to the mind or cognitive experiences of learning. These subtle but constant underlying forces that often control our behaviour should come to the fore and inform our understanding of ourselves and the relation with others – both human and non-human forces. It is often not the policies or the big actions that make a difference, but the constant, subtle, everyday experiences of our entangled existence that have an affective influence and direct our actions.

From these scholars, one realises how important the aspects of embodiment and experience of social contexts are, but it is also important to understand the hybrid nature of all pedagogies. Looking for the characteristics of hybrid pedagogies, Koopman’s (2012:156-163) contribution is particularly valuable. He calls his approach a pedagogy of hybridity. Among the characteristics that he distinguishes, and that are of value for the purpose of this study are the following: plurality, ambiguity, complexity, paradox, and proximity. A brief explanation of each aspect is necessary.

By plurality, Koopman (2012:158) understands the plurality of voices, perspectives, and opinions on the different challenges one faces in theology. A pedagogy of hybridity is open to diversity and tries to deal with it in a constructive way, by opening different perspectives on topics under discussion. The latter takes place through the search for consensus and through dialogue. A hybrid pedagogy also seeks a peaceful coexistence and ongoing conversations where there seem to be incompatible positions. Asking students to examine the topic under discussion through the lenses of others is one way in which hybridity is attempted. One finds that it helps students understand a person who has a different view and to listen to him/her and thus tolerate and embrace each other. It is, therefore, about building communities of tolerance that takes place with hospitality and peaceful coexistence.

According to Koopman (2012:157), ambiguity is linked to the above and refers to the fact that the same reality or phenomenon can be described in different ways in different contexts by different people and the facts can even contradict each other. Ambiguity can also refer to the shifting of the meaning of concepts, words, and sentences. It is interesting that one is often uncomfortable with ambiguity and many times one tries to avoid it and choose either relativism or absolutism. Many people cannot bear the vulnerability of uncertainty. Therefore, it takes patience, courage, and wisdom to walk the road of ambiguity and to help students master it.

Complexity within the South African context relates to the ways in which one grapples with the lessons one learned from the quests for transformation, justice, and reconciliation in post-colonial Africa (Koopman 2012:158). This broader focus makes lecturers and students aware of the complexities of South African society and helps shed light on the challenges and articulate them in a more nuanced way. The complex number of factors that must be considered helps one with the right emotional orientation and a certain sensitivity to local challenges.

One must deal with paradox and one's mind goes back to Martin Luther, who, 500 years ago, already emphasised the paradoxical nature of being human with his famous statement that we are simultaneously sinners and justified (Koopman 2012:159). Living with the paradoxes of life is probably one of the biggest challenges in the African context. In short, it means saying "Yes" at times to the good things that happen in this country, otherwise one very soon becomes apathetic, discouraged, and unfaithful to one's calling. But it also means saying "Yes" to some of the bad things that happen in this country, otherwise one is unrealistic, dishonest, and naive.

This brings me to the last element of a hybrid pedagogy and that is proximity. A pedagogy of hybridity would like to support the idea of the proximity of people (Koopman 2012:160). A valuable contribution on the role of proximity comes from Augsburg (1989:31) with his understanding of sympathy as the affective response to another's feeling based on a shared observation; empathy as the affective response to another's feeling based on differences between observation, and interpathy as the deliberate affective and cognitive understanding of another's feelings and thoughts from a different epistemology and culture. Proximity between lecturers and students is thus crucial for a hybrid pedagogy. With a better understanding of embodied and hybrid pedagogies, I can now pay attention to the ecumenical tours as a case in point.

#### **4. ECUMENICAL TOURS AS A CASE IN POINT**

Ecumenical tours consist of a rich variety of embodied and lived experiences and, therefore, form an important component of the tours. A diversity of exposures to different contexts and activities are also part of these excursions. I have been the coordinator of these tours for the past 15 years and try to take the tour groups to different parts of the country every year. In a previous contribution (Nell 2015:540-541), I reported on the tours as follows:

1. The students attend the worship services of different denominations that vary from their own denominational background. Given the fact that most of these students are from a Reformed background, they are exposed to the practices and activities of the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox traditions, as well as Charismatic and Pentecostal churches.
2. There is also the opportunity for conversations with the spiritual leaders of these traditions, creating the opportunity to get an "insider perspective" on the tradition. During a tour to Namibia, our group stayed in a Roman Catholic monastery and retreat centre close to Windhoek in Namibia, experienced some of the faith disciplines of the community and listened to the story of a priest who served for fifty years as a missionary from Germany.
3. Conversations are also organised with people involved in broader ecumenical structures, such as the chairperson of the Namibia Council of Churches, rectors of centres and colleges responsible for theological education, and moderators and personnel of synodical bodies from the different denominations.



4. During recent tours, we also paid visits to non-governmental organisations, such as the Christian Medical Relief Centre and Bethesda Hospital in George, where they care for children orphaned by HIV/Aids as well as people who are terminally ill. We visited projects assisting with job creation in Port Elizabeth, such as Vista Rus, a factory producing tinned fish in Mossel Bay to better understand the circumstances of the manual labourers, a soup kitchen in Tembaletu township close to George to realise the need and vulnerability of the inhabitants, and many more.
5. By visiting these organisations and through exposure to their activities the students also experience something of their living and working conditions, especially of people living in squatter camps and informal housing. It is normally in these circumstances that the students become deeply aware of the inequalities of our society.

The above report shows that an attempt is being made to expose the groups to different ecumenical contexts. Equally important is to take into account the composition of the different groups. Students from different denominational, social, and cultural contexts form part of the groups. Most of the students come from the Dutch Reformed Church and the Uniting Reformed Church, but there are also Lutheran and Anglican students. Usually, these students are in each other's presence for approximately ten days and I always find the different interactions between the students very informative. Often, conflict arises between students for various reasons (they are in each other's space, confessional differences, world view differences, and so on), which naturally pose their own challenges. In the MDiv programme, the ecumenical tour plays a key role and students often regard this as the highlight of the year. In the next section, I explore how this programme contributes to the development of embodied and hybrid pedagogies.

## **5. PROCESSES FACILITATING EMBODIED AND HYBRID PEDAGOGIES**

I am convinced that embodied and hybrid pedagogies can be considered a blend of critical engagement and reflective thinking that are cultivated through the following practices:

- The first practice, and from an academic point of view the most important activity, is the integration of theological theories and ministry practice. In line with the embodied and lived experience and the underlying values that characterise a hybrid pedagogy, which include

paradox, proximity, plurality, complexity, and ambiguity, a context is created within which the students have the opportunity to think critically about their experiences during an event created for reflection at the end of each day. By creating these spaces, the students are given the opportunity to share their perceptions and experience with each other. A critical dialogue arises between the practices they observe during the course of each day and what they have learned in the university classrooms over the course of five years. This forms part of what Johnson and Morris (2010:77) describe as “reasonable reflexive thinking on deciding what to do or believe”. With this activity, one comes to the heart of any pedagogical process and this often results in the transformation of the students’ thought processes. This practice-theory interaction within the field of practical theology is one of the basic points of departure in our field of study.

- The second practice is the training for, and exposure to congregational ministry. Contextual exposure in research literature relates to “experiential and embodied knowledge” and can be described as

[i]nformation and wisdom gained from lived experience and understanding things and events through direct engagement. Lived experience incorporates the actual experience itself along with the meanings attributed to the experience by the person experiencing it (Given 2008:322).

In line with the embodied pedagogies I discussed in the previous section, the exposure that students experience during the tours creates unique opportunities for learning and teaching with a view to preparing for ministry in the congregation. Listening carefully to the stories of individual leaders of communities of faith and observing the various activities create fruitful learning and teaching opportunities.

- The third practice is related to the development of ministry competencies. A few years ago, Burger and I (Burger & Nell 2012) developed a profile for graduated students who are on the point of entering the ministry. This profile has been accepted by different denominational bodies and some of the following ministry competencies are discussed in the framework: communication and teaching skills; pastoral skills; preaching and liturgical skills; diaconal involvement in the community and the wider society through processes of reconciliation and justice, and the ability to form a community of faith. Although the students do not have the opportunity during the tour to practise these different competencies, they can still experience something of these competencies through critical reflection on the exposure to “practitioners” in the real world of work.

It is possible to describe and identify other practices, but, in my opinion, the above is adequate to get some idea of the role these factors play in embodied and hybrid pedagogies. The next section focuses on one specific aspect of the tours, namely a one-day pilgrimage.

## **6. IF YOU WALK, YOU HAVE HOPE**

On the last ecumenical tour, we experimented with a new activity for the first time. Together with a few colleagues, we decided to take the students on a one-day pilgrimage that forms part of the so-called Garden Route Camino. A two-week pilgrimage starts in Uniondale and ends after 280 km at the light house in Mossel Bay. We decided to take the students on the last day of this pilgrimage that stretches from Hartenbos to Mossel Bay. The pilgrimage goes under the banner “If you walk, you have hope”.<sup>2</sup>

This one-day pilgrimage included the following components. A conversation in preparation for what to expect;<sup>3</sup> an agreement that the first two hours will be walked in complete silence; a visit to the Isinyoka township where visits were made to two nursery schools and an AIC congregation; a visit to the Bartholomeu Dias Museum Complex; Holy Communion at the Dutch Reformed congregation of Mossel Bay; a conversation with the local minister, and a celebration at the Cape St Blaize Lighthouse Complex to conclude the day.

Pilgrimages are, of course, a practice of the Christian tradition which has been established for over 1,000 years and which is practised by means of a physical activity such as walking a 20- to 30-day pilgrimage route. Ancient pilgrims made pilgrimages with the exclusive aim to reach a holy place. The emphasis was finally on the destination. Nowadays, hundreds of thousands of people walk annually to Santiago de Compostella, with many of them not having any understanding of the historical or religious significance of the place and without agreeing to the religious claims associated with a pilgrimage such as the Camino de Compostella in Spain (Marais 2022:245).

Some literature deals with pilgrimages. On South African soil, there are, among others, Nico De Klerk (2018); Ernst Grundling (2017); Frits de Lange (2017), and Paul Post (2022).

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2 This title is a motto that has taken hold among South African pilgrims. It was first used by Dr Fanie Herholdt during a recording led by Ernst Grundling for a series of programmes that were recorded and broadcast on TV in the lockdown period of 2020 under the title: “Elders: Pilgrimage of hope”.

3 “Pilgrimages are encompassing events for those who embark on them. They take planning, preparation, ritual, and physical preparation” (Pembroke *et al.* 2022:114).

However, in line with the initial research question, I attempt to provide an answer to the question: Why and how does the practice of pilgrimage foster embodied and hybrid pedagogies? One of the most beautiful quotes on pilgrimage and walking comes from Kierkegaard who writes in 1847:

Above all, do not lose your desire to walk; every day I walk myself into a state of well-being, and walk away from every illness; I have walked myself into my best thoughts, and I know of no thought so burdensome that one cannot walk away from it ... If one just keeps on walking, everything will be all right.<sup>4</sup>

To explore pilgrimages through the lenses of embodied and hybrid pedagogies, I think that it is important to develop a working definition for pilgrimages. Marais (2022:246) uses the work of Greenia (2014:10) who understands a pilgrimage as a “holy journey” that is an intentional ritual-driven breaking of the normal rhythms of life and social networks of the pilgrim involved. During the hike, the pilgrim finds him-/herself in a chosen new alternative and a dependent liminal space of foreignness. It is a new context which, along the way, leads to a new community or *communitas*. *En route*, reality becomes transformed from the static experience of *stabilitas* to a fluid reality of “being on the way”. In the fluid reality of “being on the way”, a new *communitas* develops with the potential to lead to transformation. On the way, the reality is experienced as “sacred”, thus transforming ordinary experiences into “meaningful experiences”.

Along the way, through the pilgrim’s ability to engage in everyday life, s/he grows to receive “gifts of grace”, which are experienced as signposts to a new identity and lifestyle. The newly found identity includes, among other things, the possibility of new community formation as well as transforming and transcending the consciousness of social class, personal identity, and the vocation of the pilgrim. Taking this short description of pilgrimages as point of departure, I want to explore pilgrimages through the lenses of embodied and hybrid pedagogies, relate them to our own pilgrimage experience, and discuss some emerging aspects.

## 7. EMBODIED AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

As a pilgrim, one is in a certain sense stripped of comfortable thinking about transformation, and the physical walk is rich in embodied experiences. This may be one of the reasons why pilgrimages have been practised more

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4 From one of Kierkegaard's letters, 1847, cited in Schmidt (2012:126).

and more as a faith discipline. It is as if, as a pilgrim, one has a feeling that even more words do not necessarily lead to transformation. From the experience we had with the students that day, we realised that we all gained value from the silence and isolation of walking alone. The gift of bread and wine at communion also had a deeper meaning than usual. In their feedback, many of the students testified to what the silence meant to them. One student made a remark that I return to a few times. She claimed that, although she walked for two hours in silence, the noise in her head was overwhelming because of all her thoughts on conflicting experiences during our tour.

Charles Taylor, a philosopher of religion, “construes pilgrimage as a journey into a higher and deeper space, and a higher and deeper time” (Pembroke *et al.* 2022:113). Scholars such as Taylor and others are of the opinion that pilgrimages and pilgrims represent a specific spiritual practice that engages immanence and transcendence in more immediate and direct ways.

Intentional spiritual journeys can open us up to the eternal now, to timelessness, to transcendence, as an experiential and transformational event (Pembroke 2022:113).

Rooms (2022) is also of the opinion that embodied transformation should be taken much more seriously. Joining Taylor, he finds that, in the late modern era, the search is primarily for lived and experienced spirituality. Spirituality that is built on the understanding of truth as an objective and a-historical reality is losing its impact. Rooms (2022:6) writes meaningfully in this regard:

Strictly speaking, if the felt experience is meaningful, authentic, and positive, then there is a greater inclination to believe the theoretical content. Stories, the imagination, and emotional impressions consequently trump abstract reflection, which is why according to Seel, ‘We need to reorient toward experiential learning and away from abstractions’.

The landscape has, therefore, changed and the gateway to truth, worthy of imitation for the late modern person, is practised through genuine and lived experiences that are supported in various ways by embodied pedagogies. As noted earlier, the embodied pedagogy of Le Grange (2004) brings together embodiment, social practice, and environmental education in creative and exciting ways.

## 8. HYBRIDISED PEDAGOGICAL INSIGHTS

In the earlier discussion on hybrid pedagogies, terms such as ambiguity, complexity, paradox, and proximity serve as important markers for this pedagogy (see Koopman 2012). The first-hand experience of life in a township of formerly colonised people in the proximity of children with various complex challenges and the next moment the visit to a museum, that with everything in it reminds one of the histories of colonialism, can but confront one with the ambiguity and paradoxical nature of living on the southern tip of the continent of Africa.

In this situation of contradictory worlds with diverging European and African world views, Augsberger's (1989:31) work, with his understanding of sympathy, empathy, and interpathy, is of special significance. To be able to experience the affective sympathetic response of the children's situation in foster care, based on a shared observation of the teachers, struggles with very real needs in terms of financial shortages, nutritional desires, the need for a safe environment, and educational requirements were all very tangible that morning. Because of the diversity of our group, empathy as the affective response to another's feeling based on differences between observation, also came into play. The same applies when it comes to interpathy as the deliberate affective and cognitive understanding of another's feelings and thoughts from a different epistemology and culture.

## 9. CRITICAL REFLECTION

One of the most important components of all our tours is the opportunity we create at the end of each day for critical feedback and reflection on the day's events. What always surprises and amazes me is to listen to the diverse opinions and experiences and the different interpretations given to these experiences. This is, of course, also the circumstances where critical thinking skills are further honed and sharpened. In this regard, we normally work with a broad definition of critical thinking. I concur with Davies and Barnett (2015:3) when they write that

[c]ritical thinking in higher education can encompass debates about critical pedagogy, political critiques of the role and function of education in society, critical feminist approaches to curriculum, the development of critical citizenship, or any other education-related topic that uses the appellation "critical".

Many times, I have found that two students will give the exact opposite interpretation of a specific experience. This usually gives rise to interesting and lively conversations, but the danger of conflict is also always simply

below the surface. This diversity of our students, coming from very different contexts in terms of ethnicity, denominational, and cultural backgrounds (they have, it is hoped, learned to understand each other's contexts better over the years they studied together), causes some encounters that make it difficult to really imagine themselves in the other person's shoes through sympathy, empathy, and interpathy. These conversations usually conclude with an opportunity for prayer where we dedicate each other and the challenges we had that day to the Lord's care.

## **10. CONCLUSION**

I started this contribution by explaining the importance of embodied and hybrid pedagogies for the Faculty of Theology and for Stellenbosch University. Then I formulated the research question as follows: Does the exposure of students through ecumenical tours, as part of the Master of Divinity programme, foster embodied and hybrid pedagogies, and if so, in what ways? In the remainder of the contribution, I attempted to provide an answer to this question by starting to give a brief overview of the history of ecumenical tours and then an explanation of what I understand by embodied and hybrid pedagogies. I then focused on different processes that facilitate embodied and hybrid pedagogies and looked through the lenses of the latter at one aspect of the ecumenical tours, namely pilgrimages. I drew some conclusions and can state, without fear of contradiction, that ecumenical tours do indeed foster embodied and hybrid pedagogies with specific reference to the role of pilgrimages.

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