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Title Questions of authorship in a Higher Education Studies programme connecting international contexts

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#### Part I - Abstract

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This paper offers insights into the deliberation process of one particular agent who coordinated the curriculum development process of a Higher Education Studies programme aimed at connecting diverse international contexts. In this paper, she shares four specific 'questions of authorship' which she consciously identified as important before the programme's inception, which she then revisited when engaging stakeholders and collaborators, in her attempts to be responsive to an ethical obligation to the global South. Continually negotiating the politics and problematics of authorship, may be a poignant way to bring to bear that which is de/legitimised in the assessment of content, methods, assessment and contexts chosen for inclusion in such a programme. The presentation is intended as an 'opening' to fellow researchers, teachers and students in this field, to consider the significance of such conceptual framing for thinking and practices across borders.

#### Part II- Outline of paper excluding indicative reading list

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Higher Education Studies is a potentially fruitful field for an interplay with, between and across individuals, discourses, borders, disciplines, contexts, stakeholders, states and models of higher education. Informed both by the 'texts' produced by such interplays, in addition to explicitly drawing from my lived experiences of teaching and researching within this field in the post-colonial, post-apartheid context of South African higher education, in this paper I discuss the 'questions of authorship' which have most provoked and challenged my own negotiation of the development of a higher education studies programme from an UK/EU institution. Valid challenges to the politics of representation emerge – and these span considerations of the ways in which I am personally socially located in different contexts, through to the fraught nature of how institutions of higher education grapple with their own political, economic, and historic situatedness in local, national and global hierarchies and relationships. Attempting to tease out these tensions and interests in detail is beyond the scope of this paper, but will be touched upon to give insight to the sense of historical melancholia and ethical obligation from which the desire for such grappling with the problem of authorship and its de/legitimacy arises.

In this presentation I discuss how conjuring the spectre of authorship, considered passé in continental philosophy and contemporary 'western' criticism for some time, has provided a valid and poignant ethical reference point to challenge the ways in which the programme is being designed, coordinated and sustained. In this paper, I argue that the concepts of author, text and reader are important for re-considering the ways in which these concepts are constructed, and their roles positioned, in the taken-for-granted discourses and interpretative approaches of Higher Education Studies, particularly from those with an educational development origin. These concepts enable us

to interpret, and thereby more consciously shape, the sub/text we are creating when we develop a programme, and, in turn, put us in a better position to analyse its significance as it operates beyond our own intentionality in the world. As this is an international course, its reception by individual participants, in addition to commissioning institutions and quality assurance bodies in context is most important. I take, here, the basis that curricula frame relationships of teaching-learning-research to knowledge, and as such I would argue that the author, text and reader can be used just as provocatively in our research approaches, as they would be in the formation, assessment and interpretation of our students' learning.

The bulk of the discussion will deliberate these 'questions of authorship':

- (1) De/legitimising knowledge(s) in Higher Education Studies – the canon or the context?
- (2) De/legitimising development – teacher intentionality or student experience?
- (3) Enabling the possibilities of agency in co-construction of curricula - micro or macro-level?
- (4) The politics and pragmatics of research in Higher Education Studies – strategy or integrity?

To tease out each of these 'questions', I sketch the discourses and debates both prevalent and marginal to the field, in addition to my own reflections as an insider researcher/ author of this curriculum development process. I then extend this questioning to the relation between content and form in the programme – the ways in which our intentionality as curriculum developers reciprocally relates to the content, resources, processes, means and methods of that engagement.

The presentation will close by opening the discussion to participants on the limitations, risks and concerns about the significance of this conceptual framing, for our participants' experience, the positioning of such a programme, and potentially 'weakening' the already porous field of Higher Education Studies in the uncertain contemporary space of higher education.