Chapter 10
Supporting Engagement Through Critical Evaluation

Abstract This chapter comprises four interrelated sections. The first asks whether student engagement can sensibly be connected to evaluation at all; and whether and how neoliberalism influences mainstream evaluation theories and practices. The second section outlines key features of mainstream evaluation in neoliberal times so that its weaknesses can be critiqued in the third. The fourth section discusses how a critical approach to evaluation might take evaluation beyond the mainstream.

We now examine *evaluation*, the third of Bernstein's (1996) interdependent educational message systems. This assesses how ably students learn taught knowledge and how well pedagogic and curriculum goals are achieved. Pedagogy and curriculum, the other two message systems were explored in Chaps. 8 and 9. As with many educational concepts, *evaluation* is more complex than appears at first sight. One reason is that evaluation is part of pedagogy and curriculum, not apart from them. A number of principles and ideas are intertwined in and shared by all three message systems; the central role of learning outcomes, for example. Another reason is that its purposes are understood in different ways. Crooks (1988) identified eight purposes for assessment: (i) admission to and placement in programmes and learning activities; (ii) motivating students to succeed through feedback; (iii) focusing learning by making clear to students what is important to learn; (iv) consolidating and structuring learning in clear ways; (v) guiding and encouraging learning through dialogue; (vi) deciding whether students are ready to move to the next step; (vii) certifying or grading whether students have achieved required learning; and (viii) evaluating teaching and programmes. Another complicating factor is that different labels are used to discuss evaluation. *Assessment* is often employed to label purposes that have to do with judging the quality and success of student learning; *evaluation* for activities that judge the quality of a programme or teaching. In this chapter, we discuss both types of purposes under Bernstein's label *evaluation*.

The chapter first asks whether and how student engagement is connected to evaluation; and whether and how neoliberalism influences mainstream evaluation. It outlines, second, key features of mainstream evaluation in neoliberal times so

N. Zepke, *Student Engagement in Neoliberal Times*,
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3200-4_10

that, third, its weaknesses can be exposed and critiqued. Finally, the chapter discusses how a critical approach to evaluation might take evaluation beyond the mainstream.

Connections

At first sight connections between (i) evaluation and engagement and (ii) evaluation and the neoliberal mainstream may not be obvious. Yet to lend creditability to the argument in this chapter, such connections must be made. The connection between evaluation and engagement is strong. The 'approaches to learning' construct (Marton and Säljö 1976), for example, introduced in Chap. 2 identified surface, strategic and deep approaches to engagement in learning. Whichever of these approaches to learning students engage in affects purposes for evaluation. For students adopting a surface or reproducing approach the purpose is just to meet course requirements. Consequently engagement focuses on memorizing facts and procedures and treating knowledge as bits of information assembled for the evaluation in order to pass. As a result engagement in examinations, tests and assignments is superficial. The intention of students using a strategic or organizing approach is to achieve the highest possible grades by strategically choosing between surface and deep learning to achieve their goals. Engagement is designed to achieve the best possible results with the least effort (Entwistle 2005). Entwistle also suggested that learners using the deep or transforming approach want to understand ideas for themselves. Key features of deep learning include a deep and active engagement with the evaluation process for its own sake.

Additionally, student engagement is considered to be a useful predictor of success in learning and evaluation (Kuh et al. 2008). Wyatt (2011) notes a positive correlation between student engagement and student success, including success in formal evaluations. Students who engage in learning are more likely to succeed in evaluation tasks than those who do not. This does not just apply to engagement in cognitive activities that link, analyse, synthesize and evaluate ideas. Kuh et al. (2006) have also connected aspects of engagement not associated with cognitive tasks such as motivation, interest, curiosity, responsibility, determination, perseverance, positive attitude, work habits, self-regulation and social skills to success in performances on tests, examinations and other forms of evaluation. In short, student engagement is strongly associated with evaluation as it helps to develop intellectual, emotional, behavioural, physical and social functions that lead to successful evaluation outcomes. Whether at a surface, strategic or deep level, students who engage in learning are more likely to succeed in evaluations than those who do not.

Connections between neoliberal influences, engagement and evaluation are also strong. As discussed in Chap. 5 they share an *elective affinity*. Elective affinities can develop between political ideologies and seemingly unrelated ideas and practices such as engagement in higher education (Jost et al. 2009). That does not mean that student engagement is a creature of neoliberalism as interest in engagement

preceded the high tide of neoliberalism. But engagement research and practice have embraced and incorporated neoliberal beliefs and practices as a result of major and widespread ideological change in Western societies generally. The same is true of evaluation which has assumed a dominant role in neoliberal education. Yet, while evaluation policies, research and practices have adopted and even enforce neoliberal norms and language, evaluation theory and practice also maintain their own trajectories. They welcome but are not dependent on their elective affinity with neoliberalism. Consequently evaluation practices rely on their own academic traditions as well as on neoliberal norms. For example, learning objectives, a concern for validity and reliability, the use of alternative evaluation methods such as formative and ipsative evaluation have always been of interest to evaluation theorists (Scott 2016). But traditional evaluation approaches have been reshaped and sharpened to fit the neoliberal evaluation paradigm. Three key neoliberal assumptions share this elective affinity with engagement and evaluation: that what is to be learnt is practical and economically useful in the market place; that learning is about performing in certain ways in order to achieve specified outcomes; and that quality is assured by measurable accountability processes.

Evaluation of knowledge is traditionally based on disciplines. But neoliberalism has added its own requirements of evaluation by expecting that graduates are fit to serve markets as workers. This limits the scope for evaluating knowledge to competence in technical and operational workplace knowledge. According to Stuckey et al. (2014) this focus on the technical limits evaluation of knowledge to Habermas' technical domain while his interpretative and critical knowledge domains are neglected. Evaluation in neoliberal times is also very concerned with performativity: the measurement of performance using largely quantitative methods that determine whether students, programmes and teachers have met narrowly specified leaning outcomes and other performance criteria. Performativity as measured by statistics is widely expected, not only in evaluation, engagement and higher education but also in social life generally. Such measurements take on a life of their own as 'fact totems' (de Santos 2009) which can decide the future of students, programmes and institutions. Accountability is a third key neoliberal assumption that shapes both evaluation and engagement. The neoliberal use of accountability in evaluation means that performances can be audited publically (Charlton 2002). To be accountable is to be able to demonstrate that prespecified outcomes have been achieved. Such outcomes may be learning outcomes set for students, targets required of programmes or performance criteria set for teachers. According to Biesta (2004) an audit culture emerges that is keyed to an outcome orientated pedagogy, curriculum and evaluation.

Evaluation in the Neoliberal Mainstream

There is no official neoliberal model for evaluation just as there is no one prototype for student engagement. An elective affinity between evaluation and neoliberalism emerges only once shared understandings of evaluation between mainstream higher education and neoliberalism become clear. I use *Outcome-based Education* (OBE) as a proxy to reveal the elective affinity between neoliberalism and evaluation. OBE is a suitable surrogate because it contains in a single package an integrated approach to evaluation attractive to both neoliberalism and mainstream higher education. OBE was championed by the first President Bush in the USA to make education more accountable for public money spent on it (Schrag 1995). For a variety of perceived advantages involving coherence, accountability and transparency, OBE was adopted in school sectors in numerous countries such as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa (Jansen 1998). Under different names, such as competency and standards-based education, variations of OBE have also been accepted as desirable by neoliberal governments and higher education agencies throughout the Western world (Kuh et al. 2006). OBE has been adopted in 29 neoliberal oriented countries in Europe under the Bologna Declaration (Cumming and Ross 2007). The European Commission (2012) adopted OBE to address key problems in education in Europe such as chronic unemployment. Non-government bodies such as the International Engineering Alliance (2012), active in many countries adopted OBE under the provisions of the Washington Accord, a foundation stone for neoliberal international policy agreements.

So OBE ticks the policy boxes for acceptable evaluation practices in mainstream neoliberal higher education. It offers governments and institutions control of the whole educational process. The focus on diverse discipline-based content knowledge is largely replaced by practical and generic Type 2 knowledge. Type 1 knowledge is no longer the main focus for evaluation or, indeed for the learning, teaching and evaluation process. Measurable learning outcomes have assumed that role. These provide transparent evidence of accountability and performativity by showing whether outcomes have been achieved. Most mainstream higher education programmes are built on learning outcomes achieved as a result of engaging with planned educational experiences including evaluation. For teachers learning outcomes provide a clear picture of what is important to teach, how they can teach and evaluate it to prepare students for a complex and ever changing workplace. For students, learning outcomes enable a clear understanding of what is to be learnt, how they need to engage and what standards they need to achieve in order to succeed. According to Spady (1994, p. 1) “Outcome-Based Education means clearly focusing and organizing everything in an educational system around what is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences”. It focuses on and documents behavioural statements “the substance of what students have actually learned and can do, and gives educators and future employers an accurate picture of students’ capabilities” (Spady 1994, p. 38).

Learning outcomes give engagement and evaluation a clear focus. They spell out the knowledge, behaviours and attitudes that enable students to demonstrate that they are able to meet the standards set by the learning outcomes. According to Spady (1994) such direct links between outcomes and evaluation create a level-playing field that enables evaluations to be fair and reliable; to measure achievements of every member of the learning community by the same criteria in the same way. Biggs and Tang (2007) suggest a holistic and constructivist design for learning to advance this tight tie between outcomes and evaluation. They propose constructive alignment to shape the whole learning process. This formalizes the connection between learning outcomes, planning engaging learning activities and evaluation. The intended outcomes indicate the activities students are to engage in to achieve the outcomes. Whether the outcomes are achieved is then determined through devising and grading evaluation tasks. Outcome statements are developed around verbs such as describe, define, explain, construct, demonstrate, evaluate in order to specify how something is to be learnt and what is to be assessed. Such verbs set standards that enable judgements to be made about whether the learning outcomes have been achieved. There are two forms of standards-based evaluation. One is competence based and compares students' performance with a standard and reports the performance as competent or not yet competent. The other is achievement based and recognizes excellence by including levels of achievement on a set standard such as letter or numerical grades.

According to Spady (1994) OBE reflects the complexities of real life now and for the future. Learning outcomes from the OBE stable therefore are both sensitive to the specific requirements of different subjects and learning contexts and also generic. For example, one generic process has developed around what Killen (2005) calls key competencies. These identify knowledge, skills and attitudes people need to live, learn, work and contribute to as active citizens. Generated in an OECD (2005) project involving 12 member countries, key competencies are organized into three overarching and generic clusters: using tools such as technology and language; interacting in heterogeneous groups; and acting autonomously. But these key competencies also accommodate numerous specific context and subject bound outcomes that can be evaluated using OBE methods. Biggs and Tang (2007) outline a taxonomy to recognize both the specific and generic nature of learning outcomes. They observed that linking learning outcomes purely to competencies neglected structural complexities involved in learning. They wanted learning outcomes to be evaluated according to the level of competency students demonstrate when their achievements are evaluated. Their *structure of the observed learning outcomes* (SOLO) provided a taxonomy of learning outcomes that enables qualitative as well as quantitative evaluation. They identified five ascending levels of evidence for learning in the SOLO taxonomy. These range from outright misunderstanding through surface to deep approaches to learning. Each level is established by dedicated verbs that describe the outcome level. Such levels enable learning outcomes and evaluation results to be carefully calibrated.

Evaluation that determines whether students have met the level of performance required by learning outcomes is summative or evaluation *of* learning. It is a

judgement of the level a student has performed on in meeting the learning outcomes and decides between success and failure. This performativity and accountability view of evaluation has been softened by a shift to evaluation *for* learning. This shift is facilitated by OBE, constructive alignment and the SOLO taxonomy where evaluation is but a part of an integrated system of complex learning comprising outcomes, engagement in learning activities and evaluation (McDowell 2012). In evaluation *for* learning the emphasis shifts from summative to formative evaluation by providing valuative feedback on the quality of learning. This provides students with ongoing information on how they are currently performing on meeting learning outcomes. Brown and Race (2013) suggest seven ways to align both formative and summative evaluation with engagement in learning: evaluation that (i) helps students who want to learn rather than create anxiety; (ii) ensures learning outcomes are in constant view of learners; (iii) gives students ample practice in generating evidence that they can meet learning outcomes; (iv) provides useful feedback on the work students do in class; (v) gives quick and useful feedback on assignments and tests to help students understand what they can and cannot currently do; (vi) encourages students to coach peers on outcomes they are competent in; and (vii) deepens general competence by enabling students to assess their own learning.

But evaluation is not only about student learning. In neoliberal times performance qualities of universities, their programmes and teachers are also evaluated. Quality can be measured variously: for example, as value for money, fitness for purpose and as a process leading to student transformation (Harvey and Green 1993). Student success indicators such as retention, progression, completion, satisfaction and engagement can be appraised on all three measures of quality. For example, institutions that graduate a specified proportion of their students can be judged to provide value for money, be fit for purpose and possibly even to provide transformative experiences. Such evaluations usually include summative and formative elements that can lead to publication of both negative and positive outcomes. Results of summative evaluations can affect public perceptions, the future of programmes and the prospect of career advancement. Formative evaluations offer feedback including commendation and suggestions for improvement (Spady 1994). At least two broad accountability approaches can be identified: post course surveys and nationally conducted institutional evaluations. The former involves mainly students to provide feedback on teaching performance but can also draw in the views of interested outsiders such as employers. Such surveys are usually formative but can be monitored by managers to discipline teachers who come up short in student' evaluations (Yorke and Longden 2004). The second method revolves around institutional and programme evaluations conducted by external agents that visit universities on a regular basis. They report on the performance of institutions on a wide array of criteria, usually involving OBE criteria. Such reports are published and provide a powerful accountability mechanism.

Critique

It seems almost churlish to critique neoliberal understandings of evaluation. Its OBE, standards and performance-based proxies certainly seem to package all aspects of learning into coherent yet complex outcomes linked to an engaging pedagogy and evaluation methods. Learning outcomes indicate expectations of significant learning and so OBE can prepare students to be competent in life at work and in the community using transparent, fair and reliable evaluation methods. It enables institutions to provide value for money, be fit for purpose and maybe transformative. In short, OBE in neoliberal times seems to have the potential to make constructive contributions to individual and institutional performance; to ensure quality in engagement and learning. Yet, this positive interpretation neglects the debates and criticisms surrounding OBE and other competency and standards-based models of education and evaluation. In the main the debates take opposing positions on whether OBE's reliance on learning outcomes, constructive alignment and approaches to learning restricts and narrows learning into a purely technical process that fits graduates into the neoliberal workplace (Jansen 1998). In this section we examine some of the limiting impacts of OBE and similar mainstream systems on student engagement and evaluation. I focus the critique on learning outcomes concerned with competence rather than knowledge and values; the positivist meaning given to competence and the neglect of humanist and critical interpretations; the strong emphasis on political and economic meanings of accountability and performativity and the neglect of other views (Macfarlane 2016); the linking of fairness and reliability with sameness; the overlooked connection between evaluation and culture; and the audit approach to quality assurance processes.

A first important critique of OBE and allied competency and standards-based evaluation approaches is that it leads to a technical and reductionist view of evaluation that is narrowly focused on accountability and performativity of employment-related skills (Macfarlane 2016). Evaluation's goal here is to identify what students can do as a result of learning, not what they know or value. Under the influence of neoliberal policy OBE has become a funnel for channelling learning into operational competencies rather than into exploring knowledge and values. While this restricted evaluation approach is probably different to Spady's (1994) original transformational vision for OBE, it does satisfy the requirements of the mainstream neoliberal mindset. Rather than being holistic indicators of significant learning, learning outcomes and their evaluation focus on operational 'how to' competencies that demote knowledge and values to what is absolutely necessary for efficient behaviour. Biggs and Tang's (2007) description of constructive alignment and SOLO taxonomy further operationalize evaluation by tying learning outcomes to verbs like identify, enumerate, compare, contrast, theorize, evaluate. Such verbs restrict the ability to assess knowledge for its own sake and almost void opportunities to evaluate values. Barnett (1994) observed that of his three models of competence—academic, operational and critical—only operational competence

flourishes in neoliberal times. Academic competence, centred on Type 1 propositional knowledge regresses to a mere commodity supporting operational competence. Barnett's critical competence model, focused on values around democratic dialogue, reflection and consensus, is largely replaced by a neoliberal reading of citizenship in OBE.

Another critique is that OBE and similar models are closely tied to behaviourist psychology. As discussed in Chap. 6 behaviourist psychology is part of what Walsh et al. (2014) argue belongs to a natural-scientific paradigm. This holds to an idealized view of science in which facts are value free, established by empirical evidence and correct ways of seeing the world. Evaluation is objective, validated by following clear criteria, methods and processes (Scott 2016). Scott observes that there are other evaluation models that are not behaviourist or value-free and objective. He identifies interpretivist, critical and postmodern views that render the natural-scientific psychological model contestable. Interpretive and critical thinkers, for example, look for alternative evaluation models of learning, teaching and institutional performance that reject meanings of success reduced to a set of prespecified, behavioural and measurable learning or administrative indicators. To them learning success cannot be determined by prespecified learning outcomes, externally set indicators or criteria. Scott provides a useful summary of such alternative evaluation models. In an interpretative model the meaning of success is negotiated by all actors engaged in classroom practice such as students, teachers and managers, not predetermined by outsiders. Critical theorists look for action in evaluation that is informed by reading the world for a sense of social, economic and ecological justice that gives voice to traditionally marginalized people and so subverts the agendas of those with ideological power. In both alternative models evaluation relates to the world and not just to work.

Another critique considers the influence of political and economic reason on OBE and evaluation. As discussed earlier, the elective affinity between engagement and neoliberalism is strongly influenced by an agenda to commodify knowledge and achieve performativity and accountability. Learning outcomes guiding OBE-type evaluations promote and enforce this agenda. As suggested above, academic competence represented by Type 1 knowledge is largely absent from this agenda. Instead learning outcomes, engaging learning activities and evaluations are set up to show that students have acquired knowledge for economic success. Quality learning requires learners to gain such useful knowledge in pedagogically suitable ways (Entwistle 2003). But this view focuses narrowly on technical and instrumental human interests ignoring knowledge that might be emancipatory. Learning outcomes also help evaluate learning in ways that measure and report student, teacher and institutional performance. Summative and formative evaluation becomes a technology of control that judges, compares and often publicizes performances and so creates feelings of emotional compliance that pressure students to perform in certain ways (Fielding 2006). Accountability in turn supports a culture of teaching, learning and evaluation that Biesta (2004) dubs an audit culture. Evaluation ensures that appropriate learning outcomes and evaluation protocols conform to politically and economically desired outcomes. The education systems

created by OBE and its competency and standards-based cousins remind of *governmentality* which refers to the way conduct is normalized within societies by forging a consensus about what is important—in this case higher education (Lemke 2007).

A fourth critique focuses on the way fairness and equity are conceptualized in mainstream evaluation. OBE informed evaluation theory and practice under neoliberalism tries to balance two contrasting views of fairness and equity (McArthur 2015). On the one hand the demands of accountability and performativity require that what students produce in evaluations should be judged in the same way according to the criteria set in learning outcomes. Evaluations reflecting this view are primarily concerned with judging the product of learning consistently, transparently and free of value judgements according to the same standards regardless of subject, context and characteristics of students. McArthur (2015) argues that accountability, performativity and consistency win out because recognition of difference or individuality is constrained to what the learning outcomes require. Consequently "the ways in which fairness is often understood rest(s) on procedural notions of justice: ensuring the right procedures will ensure students are assessed fairly" (McArthur 2015, p. 3). This view of fairness is supported by students who often view themselves as customers with consumer rights to fair and equitable treatment. This leads them to favour sameness over difference in treatment. For example, they want institutions to assess in ways that enables them to compare themselves to others by judging the quality of their own education against other universities based on published evaluation results (Medland 2016).

A fifth critique of OBE-type evaluation again tackles fairness and equity. But now it concerns the way neoliberal social and cultural beliefs and practices avoid evaluation practices that recognize differences in culture. Medland (2016) argues that the evaluation culture that rules higher education favours monocultural Western assumptions and educational practices of fairness and equity. Employers, national quality assurance agencies and the general public assume that graduates have met common standards governed by Western cultural norms. That students themselves not only support but demand adherence to this culture, suggests that sameness will continue to be the dominant meaning of fairness and equity into the future. Leathwood (2005) argues that sameness in evaluation is so important because it is closely interwoven with relations of power. It sidesteps the unequal distribution of power between educators and students because teachers and graduates have run the same race, faced the same difficulties and shown their mettle in successfully finishing the evaluation race. This monocultural view of evaluation is unfair as neoliberal governments have sought to attract diverse cultural groups, yet deny that they are different when it comes to evaluation. But diverse cultures are not just about ethnicity as there are many cultures in higher education. As Madden (2015) found in her literature synthesis of the educational needs of first peoples in Canada, one way will not do justice to diverse cultures in higher education. Fairness and equity structured around predetermined learning outcomes and constructive alignment cannot deal justly with cultural differences (McArthur 2015).

A final critique broached here centres on the performativity and accountability processes employed to judge whether teachers and universities as well as students meet the quality standards established by governments and other stakeholders. Such processes often require numeric evidence about dodgy engagement indicators such as student attendance and in-class participation. Students, teachers and institutions must engage with such indicators in the expectation that they will demonstrate quality performance (Macfarlane 2016). Raban (2007) questioned that an accountability culture can lead to quality enhancement. He argues that audit accountability leads to a relative lack of interest in quality enhancement. An avoidance of risk, stifled innovation and suppressed desire for change results. Moreover, he suggests, that audit systems focused on public comparative performance statistics are weakly integrated into the educational purposes of higher education and also engagement. Jennings (2007) reinforces this general critique by arguing that quality audits are primarily focused on measuring institutional performance and student outputs/outcomes against external standards, not on how to enhance the quality of institutional research, teaching, learning, community engagement and the student learning experience. Scott (2016) observes that accountability systems are generally based on a mixture of central control to assure that government priorities are met and consumer interests, where the requirements of stakeholders, particularly employers, are added to government priorities. While Scott does not discuss neoliberalism, his analysis suggests that audit accountability serves technical interests and governmentality. This kind of evaluation seeks objectivity, rationality, empirical evidence and operational usefulness; precisely the qualities valued in neoliberal times.

Towards a More Critical Approach to Evaluation

Critique requires a response that rebuts criticism or offers an alternative. We will take the latter approach but not to scuttle mainstream practices altogether. This alternative assumes that it is possible to reshape neoliberal approaches to evaluation into more critical ones. But what does that mean? Evaluation is part of learning, not apart from it and therefore shares assumptions and practices with pedagogy and curriculum which were discussed in Chaps. 7–9 as a critical alternative to mainstream engagement. The ideas in these chapters, such as Freire's *conscientization,* transfer to evaluation. With pedagogy and curriculum focusing students on building critical self-awareness of their own and others' lives, a critical evaluation judges students' awareness of social, political and economic conditions in the world as well as their readiness for the job market. A critical evaluation assesses students' ability to critically reflect on their own learning, be actively engaged in the evaluation process, identify faulty facts and logic, recognize and challenge ideas of dominant ideologies, actively work to improve their own well-being and that of others and work to achieve social justice beyond the procedural notions of fairness. Au (2012) echoes Bernstein in outlining a critical approach to evaluation: (i) its

purpose is to assess students' capabilities to operate within yet change a complex world; (ii) to make sense of operational, discipline and critical *knowledge*; and (iii) to *value* engagement that is broad, deep and builds consciousness of the wider world in critical and liberating ways.

Purposes

As we observed previously, learning outcomes are at the heart of mainstream evaluation. They are used currently to stand for what students are expected to know and do at the end of their course of study. They are the latest in a long line of terms and concepts used to capture how the purposes for learning and evaluation should be expressed. Allan (1997) suggested that learning outcomes could represent an inclusive way to express purposes. They do not have to, as in neoliberal evaluation practice, signify a very narrow range of standards and behaviours that students must demonstrate to show readiness for the workplace. Allan observed an ever firming linkage to behaviourism over time, but suggested that learning outcomes do not have to be behaviourist, narrow, explicit and absolute. They have tacit and contextual qualities that cannot be captured by a verb describing a behaviour. Eisner (1996, p. 103) suggested that "outcomes are essentially what one ends up with, intended or not, after some form of engagement". While recognizing the usefulness of behavioural objectives in evaluation, he added problem-solving and expressive objectives to the purposes of education. These latter purposes add tacit and unplanned personal learning objectives to behavioural ones. Eisner cannot be called a critical theorist but his two types of personal objectives connect with what critical theorists would consider to be important evaluation purposes. They recognize the importance of including a critical awareness of self and others in society to the purposes of evaluation.

In mainstream evaluation students have little part in planning its purposes and procedures. Student participation in decision-making about evaluation practices would undermine the unrestricted power currently exercised by teachers and industry through neoliberal governmentality. A more critical approach aims to be more democratic, creative, tacit and outward looking. This is possible with more power sharing with students. But we cannot assume that student participation would immediately negate the elective affinity between neoliberalism and student engagement in evaluation. Governmentality suggests that inserting students into a planning process will not change the consensus that the conduct of relationships in classrooms be determined by those in authority. Student habits of self-regulation undermine power sharing and lead to retention of the status quo (Lemke 2002). Teachers, planners and students wanting evaluation to be more democratic must trigger a change in self-regulation, in governmentality. This requires disrupting constructive alignment which binds learning outcomes, learning activities and evaluation (Hudson et al. 2015). A first step is changing the conduct of learning activities by encouraging students to engage safely and actively in consensus

building communicative action (Habermas 1984) about their and others' learning. Such activities address set learning outcomes but implicitly widen them to include critical reflection, problem raising and solving about how they affect society and the world. By expanding the scope of learning activities, student–teacher partnerships also work to expand the instrumental focus of evaluation practices.

Achieving fairness is a key purpose for evaluation in neoliberal times. But as McArthur (2015) points out, fairness is couched largely in procedural terms—if the procedures are fair then so is the evaluation. The use of constructive alignment, for example, is an important indicator of procedural fairness. So is meeting set standards, particularly when they represent national or international measures of quality. The image here is that fairness is blind and impartial, neglectful of notions of equity and social justice. Yet equity requires that multiple and overlapping individual and group differences with the potential to affect evaluation results are recognized. Such differences are many and include gender, ethnicity, sexuality, health and socio-economic background. McArthur (2015, p. 2) suggests that social justice "is a two-pronged concept: it refers both to the justice of assessment within higher education, and to the role of assessment in nurturing the forms of learning that will promote greater social justice within society as a whole". Both equity and social justice are served by more democratic evaluation processes that recognize and accommodate differences in individuals and groups. These are also honoured when constructive alignment is disrupted by divergent learning activities and ideas (Hudson et al. 2015), more formative evaluation accompanied by timely and constructive feedback is practised; and peer and self- evaluation are valued (Brown and Race 2013). Perhaps most important in furthering equity and social justice is teaching students explicitly about evaluation processes as a key purpose of engagement and evaluation.

Knowledge

Knowledge is power—Francis Bacon's aphorism highlights the centrality of knowledge in evaluation. Without the ability to demonstrate that they command the 'right' kind of knowledge, students are rendered powerless. In neoliberal times the 'right' knowledge is technical and operational, necessary for success. Mainstream evaluation recognizes only technical knowledge as necessary in the market place, for well-being and the potential for influencing events (Barnett 1994). Hence knowing about technical operations and how to use them minimizes the need for other knowledge. But Habermas (1987) identified three kinds of knowledge, technical, practical and critical, as necessary components for a full range of human interests. An evaluation process that reinstates practical and critical knowledge as equal contributors to learning outcomes and evaluation widens the opportunity for successful students to exercise greater control over their lives. However, the importance of technical knowledge is not diminished in a more critical evaluation culture. This will continue to evaluate technical knowledge needed to perform work

and life skills. But in addition evaluations change the nature of the technical knowledge that normally dominates mainstream evaluations. For example, analytic skills go beyond maintaining and fixing work processes, problems and enhancements. They include critical analysis of political situations affecting work, community life and the environment. While literacy and numeracy skills are recognized as very important in neoliberal consciousness, a more critical evaluation expands narrow requirements for reading, writing and arithmetic operations to critical content, textual and discourse analysis of information, media and political processes.

A more critical evaluation regime also assesses knowledge beyond the technical. It evaluates practical (academic) knowledge which is associated with Type 1 knowledge. Such knowledge is generated within academic disciplines and research traditions associated with a search for truth based on reason (Høstaker and Vabø 2005). Barnett (2009) draws on Bourdieu (1998) to offer a broader description of Type 1 knowledge, not as an alternative to technical (Type 2) knowledge, but as a partner in a more holistic representation. Type 1 knowledge has been built up over time in broad fields of intellectual effort by epistemic communities. Such fields have their own key concepts, truth criteria and modes of reason and judgement. They generate knowledge that is distinct from technical knowledge for the workplace. Where technical knowledge is generic and boundary-hops disciplinary fields, knowledge generated in disciplinary fields is distinct, but ever changing; at times new and transformative. It operates within its own boundaries and imposes its own standards. As part of the formal evaluation process, Type 1 knowledge expects students to make sense of their world. But with the ascendency of the technical Type 2 knowledge in neoliberal times, evaluation of Type 1 knowledge has declined to the point where a number of researchers suggest the need for an agenda to 'recover knowledge' in higher education and evaluation (Young 2008). They refer to Type 1 knowledge which would lead to a more critical evaluation regime because it helps students to interpret their world.

Of the knowledge triads identified by Habermas and Barnett, the third is critical. For Habermas (1987) such knowledge is about critical self-reflection to achieve a transformation of perspective that enables learners to identify false consciousness of what the world is like and their part in it. Critical knowledge has the potential to free students from personal, institutional and environmental forces that limit their control over their lives and enable them to see how they and others are controlled by political, technical, economic, sexual, racial and educational ideologies of domination. For Barnett (2009) critical knowledge brings a state of being he calls 'coming to know'; a freeing from illusion and ideology. It is critical because it develops dispositions that include a will to learn, to engage and to change. Such dispositions attract qualities such as courage, resilience integrity and openness. By coming to know, students achieve a transformation of being. Critical knowledge, while it informs pedagogy and curricular in some classrooms, is largely absent from evaluations. Learning outcomes and evaluation tasks that assess technical knowledge are normal, particularly when camouflaged as informing skills; disciplinary knowledge is acceptable when it is needed to develop skills and 'right' attitudes;

critical knowledge is dangerous because it leads to questioning the neoliberal consciousness. This makes it vitally important to feature in evaluation because such knowledge calls on a form of engagement not desired elsewhere in higher education because it enables students to act and effect change in the world.

Values

Changes in evaluation values do not occur in isolation. It is worth repeating that evaluation is part of pedagogy and curriculum, not apart from them. So changes from neoliberal to more critical values, result in a values transformation in all three of Bernstein's educational message systems—pedagogy, curriculum and evaluation. Such a transformation leads teachers, students and administrators to engage critically with what is suspect about current education beliefs and espouses values that help shape a more democratic future (Brameld 1965/2000) in both the classroom and wider society. It introduces a pedagogy (and curriculum) of hope in which equity and social justice can establish themselves against neoliberal culture (hooks 2003; Freire 1995). Transformation also leads to questioning values that focus knowledge on purely technical concerns, and teaching and learning on performativity and accountability; which according to Ball (2012, p. 19) "links effort, values, purposes and self-understanding to measures and comparisons of output". The current belief that all worthwhile effort must be countable and only what can be measured counts (Lynch 2010) holds sway no longer. Student engagement rather than being aligned with neoliberalism becomes a vehicle for change for a more democratic future. The influence of performativity and accountability diminishes and this leads to greater trust between actors in higher education. But, as I observed in Chap. 9, I do not expect such values to emerge without effort or opposition and certainly not uniformly as neoliberal values remain embedded in political and educational rationality. The transformation I write about will be hard won.

The values underpinning evaluation will probably change most reluctantly given the dominance of performativity and accountability underpinning evaluation thinking. Active engagement by students in evaluation develops only gradually. Learning outcomes, for example, continue to be set by educators and/or employers and remain prominent as signifiers of purposes and standards of quality and success. But they broaden out with emerging democratic values in pedagogy and curriculum to include tacit and expressive personal and critical objectives. Students learn to value being engaged as actors in, rather than as subjects of evaluation. Learning resulting from unplanned engagement in classroom activities is evaluated along with prespecified learning outcomes. With this expanded horizon for learning outcomes and activities, evaluation is less prescriptive than it is currently. It is evaluation's purpose to determine how well students meet official and tacit learning outcomes including reading and changing the world. Evaluation protocols are more democratic with increased student engagement in decision-making about everything from constructing learning outcomes to engaging in the evaluation process. They

share, for example, responsibility for constructing and marking tests and assignments. Evaluation is less summative or high stakes and certainly less competitive as success is no longer confined to meeting narrowly confined standards controlled by the institution. Formative and self-referential or ipsative evaluation where students evaluate their own achievements over time, are valued (Hughes 2014). Fairness is not seen as sameness but as equity and social justice. Differences between people and contexts are not ignored but factored into the evaluation process.

Planning Criteria for Critical Evaluation

I have noted that critical evaluation will not be easy to achieve. Evaluation is a major bastion of power not only for teachers in higher education, but also for the preservation of neoliberal control of the education process. Evaluation is the main educational message system where neoliberal beliefs about the pre-eminence of technical skills and knowledge, performativity and accountability are made transparent and tangible. Nevertheless the question arises about *how* and *where* changes to mainstream evaluation can be achieved. I will address the 'how' question' in the next chapter. Answers to the 'where' question offer a number of possibilities. One place to challenge the neoliberal evaluation mainstream is initially in teacher, programme and institutional evaluation. Brookfield and Holst (2011) summarize a possible critical approach to evaluation in their section on *Criteria for Evaluating Programs* (p. 99). These criteria would make evaluation more democratic and more inclusive. They would ensure that student engagement becomes more agentic in evaluation and enable students to engage as full partners in planning of evaluation protocols and processes and teacher and programme evaluations. Such engagement would go beyond students offering opinions which can then be ignored.

Brookfield and Holst (2011) build their *criteria* around power and inclusion for working-class people, whom they call the dispossessed. I would agree that students from non-traditional backgrounds, including those from working-class families, are dispossessed of power in mainstream evaluation. But I am keen to see all evaluation processes become more critical and engaging, and therefore open to greater influence by the people being evaluated, be they students, teachers or institutions. Keeping this in mind, I adapt Brookfield and Holst's criteria which they framed as questions into normative statements for achieving greater democracy and inclusion in evaluation.

- Evaluation of students, teachers, programmes and institutions aim for social justice not just procedural fairness.
- Evaluation enables all people affected by evaluation processes to engage in deciding about quality.
- Evaluation recognizes that formal learning is interconnected with life and should lead to critical engagement in broader contexts.

- Evaluation ensures that political and educational ideologies guiding the educational process do not exclude the knowledge, skills and attitudes of any student.
- Evaluation ensures that graduates of programmes command the knowledge, skills and attitudes to exercise power.
- Evaluation ensures that students command the knowledge, skills and attitudes to lead.

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