

Life Orientation as a posthumanist interspace: Reclaiming human-centric higher education in a post-neoliberal South African landscape

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Abstract

This article advances a humanistic vision for higher education by reimagining Life Orientation (LO) – a South African school subject often dismissed as marginal – as a vital knowledge interspace within universities. Situated within the context of teacher education, the article critiques the dehumanising effects of neoliberalism and colonial epistemologies, and advocates for a curriculum that foregrounds relationality, ethics, and holistic learning. Drawing on posthumanist, decolonial, and nomadic theory, particularly Braidotti's work, the paper conceptualises LO as a transdisciplinary site that supports boundary-crossing and inclusive pedagogies. Through ecological metaphors and examples of courageous scholarly collaboration, the article shows how LO can foster interconnectedness, emotional intelligence, and critical consciousness. It proposes a model for recognising LO as a formal interspace in higher education – capable of addressing social fragmentation and supporting global citizenship. By aligning with the values of the Fifth Industrial Revolution and the Sustainable Development Goals, LO is positioned as essential to a more compassionate and just educational future.

Keywords: Life Orientation; knowledge interspace; posthumanism; higher education; humanistic education; decolonisation

Introduction

In an era marked by technological acceleration, ecological crisis, and intensifying social inequality, there is a growing call to rehumanise higher education (UNESCO, 2016). Across the globe, scholars and practitioners alike have critiqued the dominance of neoliberal logics within universities – logics that reduce learning to a transactional process, subordinate knowledge to metrics, and erode the affective and relational dimensions of education (Berg and Seeber, 2016; Mahon, 2021; Nussbaum, 2010). In South Africa, these challenges are compounded by enduring colonial legacies that continue to structure curricula, research agendas, and epistemic hierarchies



(Criser and Knott, 2019; Gumbo, 2016). Amid this complex terrain, Life Orientation (LO) – a subject grounded in holistic development, ethical reasoning, and critical citizenship – presents a unique opportunity to rethink the role of education in fostering human and planetary flourishing.

This article explores how LO, currently situated in the South African school curriculum as a compulsory subject post-1994, can be repositioned within higher education as a formal knowledge interspace. Drawing on both local and global precedents – including *Maatschappijleer* in the Netherlands, and Religion, Philosophies of Life and Ethics in Norway – LO represents a transdisciplinary field that integrates personal well-being, social engagement, and global awareness. It nurtures 21st-century competencies such as empathy, creativity, problem-solving, and civic responsibility. However, despite its significance, LO has long been marginalised in the academy due to its perceived lack of disciplinary purity and utilitarian value.

We argue that LO's marginal status reflects broader epistemic injustices within neoliberal and colonial academic structures, and that reclaiming its place in higher education is both a pedagogical and political imperative. Conceptualising LO as a 'knowledge interspace' allows for a reframing of its educational value – not as fragmented or secondary, but as integrative, critical, and responsive to the complexities of the contemporary world. Anchored in posthumanist and decolonial theory, this article offers a conceptual framework for embedding LO into teacher education programmes and beyond, emphasising its potential to cultivate engaged, compassionate, and reflexive graduates prepared to navigate a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world.

In the sections that follow, we critically engage the neoliberal university, introduce key posthumanist and nomadic theoretical perspectives, and explore the metaphor of the forest as a model for LO's integrative and relational potential. We also reflect on courageous conversations and collaborative efforts across South African higher education institutions to revitalise LO in higher education, positioning it as a vital interspace aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the ethos of the Fifth Industrial Revolution (5IR).

Context: Neoliberal Higher Education

The detrimental effects of the neoliberal university are becoming increasingly evident, with mounting criticism against its market-oriented logic, managerialism, and erosion of critical inquiry (Kidd, 2021; Mahon, 2021; Nussbaum, 2010). Under the neoliberal paradigm, higher education is reconfigured as a site of competition, instrumentalism, and performativity. Curricula are designed to meet economic imperatives, prioritising skills that are immediately marketable, while dismissing disciplines or subjects that are perceived as 'soft' or non-utilitarian, such as LO. This reductive approach sidelines the development of students' holistic capacities, including emotional intelligence, ethical reasoning, and civic consciousness (Berg and Seeber, 2016).

In such a context, LO is undervalued, despite its critical role in fostering personal and societal well-being. Neoliberal education systems favour disciplines that can produce measurable outcomes and economic returns. As a result, LO is often marginalised within teacher education programmes and largely absent from university curricula. Its positioning outside dominant

metrics of success is not incidental, but rather symptomatic of a broader epistemic crisis: one that privileges quantification over meaning, individualism over relationality, and standardisation over contextual responsiveness (De Jager, 2023; Kidd, 2021).

The consequences of neoliberalisation extend beyond curricula to affect the well-being of students and educators alike. Universities increasingly operate within accelerated cultures of performance, audit, and accountability – conditions that undermine the slower, deeper forms of learning that LO advocates. Research from both the Global North and South points to rising mental health concerns, disillusionment with higher education, and a diminished sense of purpose among students (Baik, et al., 2019; Lister, et al., 2023; Watson, 2021). In response to these intersecting crises, there is an urgent need for educational spaces that attend to the whole person – intellectually, emotionally, ethically, and socially.

By advocating for LO as a formal knowledge interspace, we challenge the neoliberal imaginary that confines learning to narrow, economically-driven outcomes. LO offers an alternative paradigm: one rooted in critical reflection, human connection, and ethical engagement. In re-situating LO within the university, we contribute to a growing movement that reclaims education as a site of hope, transformation, and collective flourishing (Llanera and Smith, 2021; Rorty, 1999).

Construct: Posthumanism

Posthumanism emerges as a critical response to the limitations of Enlightenment humanism and neoliberal individualism. Rather than privileging the autonomous, rational subject at the centre of knowledge production, posthumanist thought advances a relational ontology – one that sees the self as entangled with others, the environment, and non-human actors (Braidotti, 2011; Haraway, 2016). This philosophical repositioning opens space for reimagining education as a site of interconnectedness, where knowledge is co-created through relationships rather than imposed through hierarchies.

Braidotti's nomadic theory is central to this paradigm shift. It challenges fixed identities and disciplinary boundaries by advocating for epistemic mobility, affective sensitivity, and a commitment to working affirmatively with difference (Braidotti, 2011). In education, this translates into pedagogies that embrace fluidity, inclusivity, and co-responsibility. The posthuman subject is not a solitary knower, but an embedded, evolving participant in a dynamic world – a vision that aligns with the aims of LO.

Posthumanist thinking also critiques the instrumental logic of neoliberalism, particularly its emphasis on standardisation, quantification, and productivity. Instead, it calls for learning environments grounded in care, collaboration, and ethical accountability (Ferrando, 2019; Wolfe, 2010). These values resonate deeply with LO's emphasis on holistic development, emotional learning, and critical reflection.

Framing LO as a posthumanist interspace invites us to consider how knowledge can be nurtured through relational and inclusive means. It disrupts the siloed structure of traditional disciplines, foregrounding lived experience, ecological awareness, and collective well-being.

Through this lens, LO becomes a transformative space – one where students cultivate the competencies needed to navigate an interconnected and uncertain world, including empathy, ecological literacy, and global citizenship (Braidotti, 2011; Ferrando, 2019).

By embedding LO within a posthumanist ethos, we not only challenge the dominant norms of higher education, but also position LO as a site of ethical renewal. This interspace encourages learners and educators alike to think beyond the self, beyond the discipline, and beyond the university – to co-create futures rooted in care, justice, and collective flourishing.

Conduit: Life Orientation

To understand LO as a conduit for educational transformation, it is essential to revisit its original intentions within the South African school curriculum. Introduced in the post-apartheid era as a compulsory subject, LO was designed to facilitate the holistic development of learners by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for meaningful participation in a democratic society. As the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)* outlines, LO addresses health promotion, social development, personal growth, physical education, and career and life choices (Department of Basic Education, 2011). These areas directly support the cultivation of learner agency, ethical decision-making, and civic responsibility.

However, despite these progressive aims, LO has struggled to achieve legitimacy in both the schooling and higher education sectors. This is due in part to its interdisciplinary nature, which resists easy categorisation within the rigid structures of academic disciplines. Historically, LO has been viewed as a repository for 'soft' content – deriving from subjects such as Physical Education, Guidance, and Religious Studies – and has thus lacked a coherent epistemological foundation (Wassermann, 2021). Within the metrics-driven framework of the neoliberal university, this perceived lack of disciplinary purity and economic utility has led to its marginalisation.

Yet, it is precisely this interdisciplinarity and focus on intangible, affective learning that position LO as an ideal site for responding to the complex challenges of the 21st century. LO fosters a deep engagement with themes that traditional disciplines often sideline, such as emotional regulation, identity development, relational ethics, environmental stewardship, and digital citizenship. These capacities are not only vital for individual well-being, but are also central to achieving systemic transformation in alignment with global development agendas, particularly the SDGs.

More specifically, LO aligns closely with SDG 4.7, which calls for education that promotes sustainable development, human rights, gender equality global citizenship, and cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2016). By integrating these themes across its curriculum, LO equips learners with the cognitive, affective, and ethical tools necessary for critically engaging with their world. The cultivation of socio-emotional learning – an essential feature of LO – also reflects broader calls from international educational bodies for teaching that emphasises empathy, intercultural competence, and resilience (UNESCO, 2021)

Furthermore, LO offers a compelling framework for aligning higher education with the vision of the 5IR. In contrast to its predecessor, which was largely focused on technological

advancement, 5IR emphasises the integration of humanity and technology, prioritising values such as compassion, well-being, and collective purpose (Schwab and Zahidi, 2020). As a knowledge interspace, LO nurtures these capacities by fostering reflective, relational, and embodied forms of learning. Its pedagogical emphasis on dialogue, participation, and experiential learning supports the development of post-digital literacies – skills that transcend technical proficiency and attend to the ethical, emotional, and political implications of digital engagement.

Reimagining LO as a formalised field within higher education thus requires a departure from dominant paradigms of disciplinary knowledge. Rather than forcing LO to conform to rigid academic standards, universities must create space for its transdisciplinary and transformative potential. This involves recognising the legitimacy of affective knowledge, honouring the lived experiences of students, and embracing curricula that attend to both inner development and social engagement. When embedded within higher education, LO can serve as a powerful interspace – one that bridges personal growth with collective flourishing, and theory with lived experience.

The revitalisation of LO in the higher education sector also speaks to broader movements toward curriculum decolonisation and epistemic justice. As scholars such as Le Grange (2016) and Heleta (2016) have argued, decolonisation involves more than the inclusion of indigenous content; it requires a fundamental rethinking of whose knowledge counts, how knowledge is constructed, and for what purposes. LO offers fertile ground for such reimagining. By centring relationality, contextual responsiveness, and diverse ways of knowing, LO challenges hegemonic norms and opens space for more inclusive and socially responsive forms of academic engagement.

Moreover, LO's methodological pluralism – drawing from psychology, philosophy, sociology, education, and the arts – makes it particularly well-suited for advancing transdisciplinary collaboration. It enables educators and students to engage with complex social issues such as inequality, gender-based violence, mental health, climate change, and digital ethics in ways that transcend siloed disciplinary thinking. In this way, LO becomes not just a subject, but a mode of inquiry – a space for integrating knowledge, cultivating ethical agency, and envisioning alternative futures.

By framing LO as both a conduit and a catalyst, we advocate for its formal recognition as a field of academic inquiry in higher education. This recognition requires institutional commitment, curriculum innovation, and the development of scholarly networks dedicated to theorising and advancing LO. It also necessitates a cultural shift in higher education – one that values interdependence over competition, reflexivity over performativity, and transformation over transaction. As we will explore in the following sections, courageous conversations and collaborative efforts across South African institutions are already laying the groundwork for this transformation, signalling a collective readiness to reimagine the purpose and promise of education in the 21st century.

Courageous Conversations

The theoretical repositioning of LO within higher education has not occurred in isolation. It has been catalysed and shaped by a series of courageous conversations – intentional, relational dialogues among academics who share a vision for reimagining the subject's role in higher education. These conversations emerged organically in 2018 between two scholars working in distinct institutional and geographic contexts in South Africa. What began as informal dialogue quickly developed into a broader collaborative inquiry into the marginalisation, fragmentation, and unrealised potential of LO in teacher education programmes.

One of the defining features of these early conversations was their refusal to accept the prevailing assumptions about LO's lack of scholarly worth. Instead, the dialogues were framed by a commitment to co-creating knowledge, honouring affective and experiential dimensions of teaching, and envisioning LO as a generative site of academic innovation. As Jarvis and de Jager (2021) describe, the conversations were both boundary-crossing and boundary-dissolving – inviting participants to think outside of disciplinary constraints, institutional hierarchies, and inherited binaries between theory and practice.

In 2020, these conversations culminated in the first national online colloquium, titled 'Life (Dis)Orientation in Higher Education', which brought together LO lecturers and scholars from across nine South African universities. The colloquium marked a pivotal moment of collective sense-making. Participants openly shared frustrations regarding the subject's marginalisation and inconsistencies in how it was taught, assessed, and valued across institutions. More importantly, they voiced a shared desire to reclaim LO's academic status and reorient it as a legitimate site of research, curriculum design, and pedagogical experimentation.

These dialogues were themselves acts of resistance against the isolation that often characterises work in marginalised fields. In a neoliberal context that rewards competition and silos collaboration, the LO network forged through the colloquium offered a countercultural model of academic engagement – one built on trust, reciprocity, and shared purpose. As such, the network began to embody the very values LO seeks to promote: connection, compassion, agency, and transformation.

The colloquium also laid the groundwork for a more formalised community of practice. Contact lists, resource-sharing platforms, and collaborative research groups were established, creating new opportunities for intellectual cross-pollination and mutual support. While the initial momentum revealed uneven levels of institutional support and engagement, it also surfaced a powerful undercurrent of possibility – a recognition that LO's future in higher education need not be defined by its past.

By embracing courageous conversations as both method and praxis, the LO network has begun to shift the narrative around the subject's academic legitimacy. These dialogues affirm that knowledge creation is not limited to outputs like publications or performance indicators; it also emerges in the relational, affective, and reflexive spaces that make transformative learning possible. LO, when seen through this lens, becomes a site for doing academia differently: one that nurtures the conditions for collective flourishing, within and beyond the university.

Critical Moments

The emergence of a national LO network and the hosting of subsequent colloquia represent critical moments in the ongoing effort to establish LO as a formalised and valued interspace within higher education. These events did not merely function as academic gatherings; they signified ruptures in the prevailing narrative of LO as marginal, remedial, or incoherent. Instead, they became fertile ground for collective identity formation, intellectual affirmation, and scholarly regeneration.

The first colloquium in 2020, themed 'Life (Dis)Orientation in Higher Education', proved to be a galvanising moment for many LO academics who had long worked in isolation. The colloquium facilitated the articulation of a shared critique: that the fragmented nature of LO offerings across institutions diluted its potential impact and reinforced its status as a curricular afterthought. Through open dialogue, participants confronted the inconsistencies in institutional offerings, curricula, and assessment practices which had hindered the development of a cohesive academic identity for the field.

Yet, this critique was accompanied by hope. The colloquium made space for imagining new futures for LO – futures grounded in its integrative and transdisciplinary potential. It became clear that LO could not and should not be retrofitted into the conventional mould of a single discipline. Rather, it required a new conceptual grammar, one that affirmed its value as a knowledge interspace – a site where affect, ethics, reflexivity, and multiple ways of knowing converge.

Following the colloquium, a number of tangible outcomes were initiated. Contact lists and working groups were established, scholarly resources and teaching materials were circulated, and a special journal edition was proposed to stimulate research in the field. These actions gave momentum to a burgeoning scholarly community that had previously lacked institutional recognition. Despite varying levels of follow-through among participants, the colloquium catalysed a deeper awareness of LO's potential and the urgency of reclaiming its academic space.

The second colloquium in 2022, themed 'Reorientation of Life Orientation in Higher Education', expanded upon this foundational work. It was notable for foregrounding the decolonisation of curriculum content and teaching-learning approaches. What set this gathering apart was the use of pre-organised interest groups – academic subgroups tasked with collaboratively exploring and theorising distinct dimensions of LO. These included focus areas such as environmental education, sexuality education, indigenous knowledges, and digital ethics.

While engagement levels varied, this structure provided a model for distributed leadership and academic ownership. It also revealed a persistent tension: while many were eager to benefit from the networking opportunities the colloquium enabled (such as external moderation or examination appointments), fewer were ready to invest in sustained scholarly collaboration. This asymmetry points to broader systemic pressures within academia, including time constraints, institutional hierarchies, and the precarious status of academics working in LO.

Nevertheless, the colloquia demonstrated that scholarly interest in LO is not only possible but urgently needed. They reaffirmed the value of relational and collective academic work and

underscored the central insight of this article: that LO's legitimacy will not be secured by adopting the logics of conventional disciplines, but by affirming its unique epistemological contribution to higher education. In the face of increasing social fragmentation, ecological breakdown, and educational burnout, LO stands as a compelling model for reimagining the university as a space of care, complexity, and co-creation.

In this spirit, we propose that critical moments – such as colloquia, co-authored publications, and collaborative teaching projects – be embraced not as add-ons to academic life, but as essential infrastructures for building epistemic communities. These spaces enable what bell hooks (1994:12) calls 'education as the practice of freedom' where knowledge is not commodified, but shared in the pursuit of transformation. As the LO network continues to evolve, these moments serve not only to consolidate academic legitimacy, but to reframe what it means to know, to teach, and to learn in – and with – LO.

Conceptualising Life Orientation

The reconceptualisation of LO as a formal knowledge interspace invites us to critically examine how knowledge is structured, valued, and legitimised in the academy. Traditionally, higher education has organised knowledge into silos, where disciplines operate as autonomous entities with defined boundaries, standards, and epistemological commitments (Bernstein, 2000; Young, 2013). While disciplines offer important frameworks for inquiry, their rigid boundaries often constrain intellectual cross-pollination and exclude knowledge that is embodied, relational, or socially constructed.

Drawing on Bernstein's theory of singulars and regions (2000), we understand disciplines as both epistemic and moral territories – guarded by institutional norms that determine who may enter, what counts as legitimate knowledge, and how knowledge is to be evaluated. Singulars, or strongly bounded disciplines, are typically afforded higher status, while hybrid or interstitial knowledge fields like LO struggle for recognition. These dynamics reflect what Muller and Young (2019) describe as the politics of knowledge, wherein power and prestige shape the visibility and valuation of different fields of study.

LO challenges these conventions by refusing to be reduced to a singular knowledge domain. Its strength lies in its integrative nature – drawing from psychology, philosophy, sociology, public health, pedagogy, and the arts to address real-world issues such as identity, ethics, social justice, sexuality, health, and environmental sustainability. Rather than adhering to the logic of exclusivity, LO invites the academy to embrace inclusivity, intersectionality, and contextual relevance.

To make sense of this integrative approach, we turn to the ecological metaphor of the forest – a concept inspired by Wohlleben's (2016) work on interspecies communication and symbiosis among trees. In this metaphor, LO is likened to a thriving forest ecosystem composed of various trees (disciplines) connected by mycelial networks (shared values, ethical principles, and pedagogical commitments). The yellowwood tree, South Africa's national tree, symbolises the rootedness and resilience of LO within local cultural contexts. The hyphae and mycelium

beneath the surface mirror the intangible threads – such as empathy, collaboration, and co-learning – that link the various subfields of LO and enable the sharing of resources, insights, and support.

This metaphor provides a powerful visual for understanding LO as a living, breathing knowledge interspace – one that is dynamic, adaptable, and relational. It resists the extractive logic of monoculture and embraces biodiversity, echoing Braidotti's (2011) nomadic theory and its call for multiplicity, fluidity, and ethical interconnectedness. Through this lens, LO is not a fragmented collection of marginal topics, but a coherent whole that gains strength from its diversity.

Such a framing also aligns with transdisciplinary theory, particularly the work of Nicolescu (2005, 2014) and McGregor and Volckmann (2013), who argue for the creation of interspaces – sites where academic, experiential, and indigenous knowledges intersect to generate context-responsive and socially impactful learning. These interspaces are not static, but evolve through dialogue, reflexivity, and collective inquiry. In LO, interspaces manifest in the dialogic interplay between lived experience and theory, between teacher and student, and between personal growth and social transformation.

Moreover, this approach enables LO to be both decolonial and future-oriented. It deconstructs Eurocentric hierarchies of knowledge and opens space for epistemologies of the South, indigenous wisdoms, and embodied learning practices. At the same time, it prepares students to navigate complex global futures – futures marked by climate change, digital disruption, and socio-political volatility – by equipping them with the emotional, ethical, and cognitive tools they need to adapt, respond, and lead.

Ultimately, conceptualising LO as a knowledge interspace enables us to move beyond deficit narratives and toward a vision of LO as intellectually rigorous, socially engaged, and pedagogically innovative. It affirms that education must be more than the transmission of content; it must be a site of encounter, relation, and transformation. In the following section, we will explore how this conceptual model plays out in classroom practices, student experiences, and the broader university culture – emphasising the intangibles that give LO its generative potential.

Intangibles in Practice: The Classroom as Interspace

In practice, the intangible dimensions of LO – such as emotional engagement, vulnerability, reflection, and connection – are often the very elements that catalyse deep and transformative learning. These are difficult to quantify, yet crucial for cultivating ethical and affective capacities in both students and educators. In the LO classroom, the interspace manifests not only in curricular content but in pedagogy, atmosphere, and relationship.

Classroom spaces become sites of courageous dialogue, where students are invited to bring their lived experiences into conversation with theory. Lessons on identity, for example, often generate spontaneous narratives about belonging, gender, faith, and family. When facilitated with care and respect, these disclosures become powerful moments of collective insight and

healing. Rather than positioning knowledge as external to the self, LO affirms that students are already knowers – that their embodied experiences are valid and valuable sources of inquiry.

Pedagogically, this demands a high level of relational competence from educators. LO lecturers must model emotional awareness, cultural humility, and dialogic openness. They must create learning environments where discomfort is not feared, but embraced as part of growth. Importantly, this requires moving beyond the banking model of education toward more participatory, reflexive, and co-constructed forms of teaching and learning.

These pedagogies are not easy to measure, nor are they always recognised in academic performance metrics. Yet their impact is often profound. Students report feeling seen, heard, and validated in ways that are rare in other academic contexts. They develop greater empathy for themselves and others, enhanced self-awareness, and the confidence to engage with difficult questions in their own lives and communities.

In this way, LO becomes a microcosm of the kind of higher education we argue for throughout this article: one that is humanising, holistic, and responsive to the challenges of our time. It teaches not only content, but ways of being in the world – ways that foreground ethics, relationality, and care as central to knowledge and citizenship alike.

In the final section, we draw these threads together by situating LO within the broader discourse of educational transformation – arguing for its full integration into higher education as a strategic imperative for rehumanising universities, advancing social justice, and preparing graduates for life in a volatile, interconnected world.

Conclusion

This article has traced the conceptual, pedagogical, and institutional repositioning of LO within the higher education landscape, arguing for its recognition as a vital knowledge interspace. Against the backdrop of neoliberal pressures, epistemic hierarchies, and dehumanising educational paradigms, LO emerges as a site of resistance – one that nurtures ethical, emotional, and relational capacities essential for 21st-century global citizenship.

We have shown that LO is not a fragmented or remedial subject, but a dynamic and integrative field that draws on multiple disciplinary traditions while resisting rigid classification. Its capacity to foster dialogue, reflection, and social transformation positions it uniquely to meet the urgent challenges outlined in both the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG 4.7) and the vision of 5IR. These frameworks call for education that is inclusive, ethical, and human-centred – principles that are embedded within the core of LO.

Through the lens of posthumanism and transdisciplinary theory, we have framed LO as an ecological and relational knowledge system – one akin to a thriving forest where interconnected roots (values, lived experience, and pedagogical care) sustain a complex and resilient ecosystem. The metaphor of the yellowwood tree and its symbiotic networks becomes a conceptual anchor for understanding LO as both grounded in local realities and oriented toward global futures.

Importantly, the article has highlighted how LO's legitimacy is being reclaimed through courageous conversations, critical moments, and collaborative scholarship. The emergence of a

national LO network and the success of colloquia illustrate the potential for LO to foster community, reflection, and action across institutional boundaries. These engagements reveal that it is not only the content of LO that matters, but also the ways of knowing, relating, and becoming it cultivates.

At the classroom level, we see LO's generative potential most clearly in its intangibles: the care extended in dialogue, the emotional labour of learning, and the ethical commitments shared between teacher and student. These are not side effects of education; they are its essence. They prepare students to navigate ambiguity, honour diversity, and act with courage in a volatile and interconnected world.

We conclude that integrating LO into higher education is not merely a curricular choice, but a strategic and moral imperative. It calls on universities to reimagine their purpose – not as factories of productivity, but as sanctuaries of possibility. In doing so, they may come to embody the values they profess: justice, equity, compassion, and hope.

By legitimising LO as a knowledge interspace, we affirm a broader vision of the university as a place of ethical becoming. We challenge institutions to value not only what students know, but who they are and who they are becoming. In this way, LO contributes to a rehumanised higher education that is fit for our shared and uncertain future – a future that demands not only knowledge, but wisdom; not only performance, but presence; not only answers, but deeper questions.

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