

Teacher of the Year 2022

Wageningen University

Words of gratitude by Birgit Boogaard

Many thanks to the jury and the students. It is an immense honour. At the same, it feels a bit uncomfortable to stand here, as it seems that this award is only about me. It is not. As we learn from Ubuntu philosophy: "*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*", which can be translated as "to be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish human relations with them". Or in the more popular version "I am because we are". In this sense, education not an individual effort, but it is about making connections and relations between human beings. Hence, allow me to say a few words of gratitude to those who have touched my heart and without whom my teaching would not have been the same.

Let me start with the students: dear students, I am deeply grateful for your appreciation. I see this award as a major recognition for the inclusion of African perspectives in WUR courses as well as a high appreciation for the creative and liberating teaching methods that this involves. Social science and philosophical concepts can be rather abstract. I therefore draw illustrations of the key concepts. At the end of the course, the illustrations of each lecture come together in an overall mindmap with the main concepts and theories. In addition to such visualized hearing lectures, together we create a safe learning environment in which we can engage in critical self-reflection. I admire your critical attitude and courage to engage in deep self-reflection as well as your open mindedness and willingness to learn from worldviews beyond your own. It is a great pleasure and privilege to see you growing as academics and human beings, and to walk along on your lifepath. In this process, I also learn from you. Thanks for walking along on my path, specifically my path and deep wish to give African perspectives and scholars a more structural and urgently needed place in WUR education.

This path goes back 2013, when I met prof Heinz Kimmerle who introduced me to African and intercultural philosophy. From his dialogical approach, we learn that teaching African perspectives involves close collaboration with African colleagues. Hence, I could not have been teaching these courses without the work and support of the following colleagues: My deep gratitude to Pius Mosima, Beatrice Okyere-

Manu, Michael Eze, Joseph Agbakoba, Olatunji Oyeshile, Pascah Mungwini and Bern Guri. A deep and special thanks to Mogobe Ramose for his continuing support and philosophical friendship – his work on justice and truth is prominent in my courses, and urgently needed in education for liberation.

Finally, I wish to thank my colleagues at the Knowledge Technology and Innovation group, where I feel intellectually and personally at home. You're a great group to be part of! About five years ago, Cees Leeuwis was one of the first to say: "We actually need a course on African philosophy at WUR" and subsequently he gave me the opportunity to develop and teach it in my own creative way. In the following years, David Ludwig 'gave' me his course on Social Justice. His research and team on Global Epistemologies and Ontologies continues to be a great source of inspiration and collaboration. The seeds that have been planted over the past years now started growing. I am grateful to Anita Hardon for her trust, confidence and support, which stimulate me to consolidate these initiatives, and to further develop my education and research in collaboration with African colleagues. I am looking forward to continue making drawings, and meeting and connecting with students and colleagues through which we learn from each other. Thank you.

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Birgit Boogaard receives Teacher of the Year Award. Photo Luuk Zegers

<https://www.resource-online.nl/index.php/2022/10/11/birgit-boogaard-is-docent-van-het-jaar/>