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Editorial

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Schools and higher education institutions in South African closed in mid-March this year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. This is an unprecedented experience that raises huge questions about the nature and purpose of schooling in South Africa. The closing of schools and universities has highlighted very clearly the inequalities in our schooling and higher education systems. Suburban schools were able, largely, to move to online teaching since most teachers and children have computers in their homes and access to the internet. Thus, for the most part, middle-class children's schooling has been uninterrupted. This is a vastly different experience to that of learners in rural and township schools who have no access to devices or data, or even network connectivity. These learners have thus lost eight weeks of formal schooling as at the time of writing. Similarly, historically white universities have moved to online learning fairly seamlessly, while universities that serve poorer students have not yet been able to do so since many of their students do not have access to devices or to the internet.

There are some who argue that this kind of crisis provides an opportunity for educators to embrace technology and who see technology as the panacea to all the challenges facing the education system. Others argue that teachers are more vital than ever since they engage with learners and make professional judgements in ways that technology cannot. Dominic Griffiths and Maria Prozesky engage with the important question of the role of the teacher in education, arguing that teachers can be a transformative force in society. They use philosopher Alasdair McIntyre's notion of practice to argue that a focus on a practice like teaching, and the way in which this can develop virtues, offers one potential way to move forward in post-apartheid South Africa. They argue that societal transformation cannot be mandated from the top through policies, but that we need to better understand how teacher practices may shape and inform moral and social traditions and thus may guide the societal transformation for which we hope.

The study by Ed Campbell and Rochelle Kapp provides further insight relevant to the current focus on online learning. In the context of a teacher education programme for English teachers, they argue that it is important to start with the perceptions and preconceptions that teachers have about technology before forcing them to use it in their teaching. They make the case for an integrated situated approach to digital literacy that takes identities into account. In their article, they describe a qualitative case study of the digital practices and perceptions of

four pre-service English teachers. The study was motivated by their wanting to encourage student teachers of English to use technology more in their teaching. They focused on their four participants' proficiency in relation to using digital technologies, rather than on the affordances that these technologies may provide for student learning. These findings were then used to inform the curriculum of the English methods course the following year which then focused more explicitly on providing authentic tasks that were modelled, and also included providing scaffolded reflections to assess how these tasks would support learning. The purpose was to help the student teachers connect theory and practice through carefully scaffolded dialogue.

Staying with the theme of the education of English teachers, Peter Merisi and Ansurie Pillay focus on student teachers' perceptions about the learning of grammar. They argue that it is important to understand the student teachers' beliefs about teaching grammar since these beliefs will influence their practice as teachers in the classroom. Fifty fourth-year B.Ed English Education students completed a questionnaire, and 11 of these participants were also interviewed. Of these, 80% have English as an additional language. Most of the respondents believed that grammar should be taught explicitly. However, a number also said that grammar could be taught through communicative tasks and this seems to indicate the belief that both approaches are worthwhile. Most of the study participants believed that they did not have a good knowledge of English grammar because they had not been well-taught at school and they believed that this may impact negatively on their teaching practices in the future. They had hoped to receive explicit grammar instruction at university, but they did not. This has implications for the curriculum, which currently takes a communicative approach to grammar teaching.

Still in the context of teacher education, Vusi Msiza, Thabile Zondi, and Londiwe Couch engage with the relevance of peer-assessment in the era of massification of higher education. They ask if peer-assessment is a useful strategy for lecturers to manage assessment in huge classes of students and argue that it is a practice that they should use more often. The context of their study is a teacher education faculty with large student enrolments. They interviewed nine lecturers to understand their perceptions and experiences of using peer assessment in their teaching. Of the seven lecturers who used peer assessment, most used it only in fourth year since these students were seen to be more mature and able to assess their peers more meaningfully. Some lecturers use it because the process of peer assessment is worthwhile to both the assessor and the one being assessed, and they believe that it is important for student teachers to understand and reflect on the process of assessment.

The article by Anita de Melo and Ludmylla Mendes Lima is also focussed on higher education and looks at Portuguese as an additional language and on the possibilities of translanguaging, which refers to practices of language teaching in multilingual spaces and which uses the student's full linguistic repertoire in the classroom. Portuguese is offered at undergraduate level at five South African universities at present. These authors argue that materials for upper level courses in Portuguese culture and literature in South Africa would

provide postcolonial approaches and interpretations that could lead to a pedagogy of translanguaging.

The final two articles in this issue focus on Lesotho in looking at the tourism curriculum and at women principals in this country. Boitumelo Moreeng, Mzamane Nlhapo, and Motsélisi Molebese look at tourism as a school subject in Lesotho. Tourism was introduced as a vocational subject in Lesotho in 2011, with the aim of exposing learners to a hands-on and work-related curriculum that would enable them to confront head-on the challenges of poverty and unemployment. However, it became clear that many teachers continue to focus on only the academic textbook objectives of the subject, without addressing its vocational components. The authors report on a participatory study they conducted at a high school. Members of the community, teachers, and learners worked together to decide how they could make the curriculum meaningful to the learners. Learners were trained on how to make crafts by community members and were given space to sell these items at a nearby lodge. The participants then reflected on this process and their learning experiences, which provided a concrete example of how the subject could be made practical.

There is minimal research on women principals in Lesotho. Moikabi Komiti and Pontso Moorosi conducted in-depth interviews with eight women principals on their personal and professional lives. It is well-known that women's advancement to senior positions in education is affected by various factors including culture, socio-political conditions, and gender regimes. The findings of this study reveal that family played a significant role in influencing women's teaching career choices. Three of the women actively planned to become a principal, while the others had not planned a leadership career. In line with other studies in this field, it is clear that the career advancement of these women principals was hindered by gendered discrimination at the work place and by family responsibilities.

The issue closes with Wayne Hugo's review of Ursula Hoadley's book *Pedagogy in poverty*: *Lessons from twenty years of curriculum reform in South Africa* (2018). Hoadley has spent 20 years studying primary school classrooms in South Africa and her book brings together aspects of her invaluable research that has been informed by the effect on pedagogy of the many different curriculum reforms of the past two decades.