

Editorial

Labby Ramrathan

School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa
ramrathanp@ukzn.ac.za

The recent release of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) results, indicating that 81% of Grade 4 learners cannot read with comprehension, once again brings to fore the stark realities of our current education system and its impact on the social, political, and economic situation of South Africa. Sexual violence, another of society's ills, continues to be a dominant concern despite the educational interventions being made through research and scholarship. Despite a proliferation of research and publications on school, higher education, and social issues, the learning outcomes of the education system continues to be suboptimal. Key questions, then, need some responses. These include: "Is the scholarship on education impactful within the South African context?" "Are the research and scholarship on education in South Africa filtering into the policy making processes?" "What are the obstacles in transitioning education scholarship into sustainable responses to the educational changes that our country needs?" and, finally, "Why are we doing research and publications on educational issues?" In this general issue of *Journal of Education*, more insights on school and higher education are presented.

Following on from the last general issue, the article, "The use of information and communication technology in the teaching of Sesotho as a home language," continues the conversation on early reading. In this article, the authors explore the use of ICT in the teaching and learning of an Indigenous language, Sesotho. The authors argue for the use of ICT as a collaborative learning process for Indigenous language competence acquisition, especially in rural communities. Continuing with school education curricula, the article on "Analysing the curriculum philosophy of *equipping learners with values*, and its conceptualisation for integration into life sciences teaching in South African schools" explores curriculum policy statements specifically relating to values, and how these values could find expression in the learning and teaching of subjects like life sciences. Using textual data from school curriculum policy documents, the author offers explanations on how values can be understood and interpreted in subject teaching.

"A literature review of South African schools for the blind and their use of educational sexual models in comprehensive sexuality education" extends the scholarship of sexuality education in the school education system. In this article, the author explores, through a systematic literature review, teachers' perceptions on the use of sexual models in teaching comprehensive sexuality education in a school for the blind. The debates on comprehensive sexuality education continue to be a global one. In the article on "Teachers' perceptions on

teaching comprehensive sexuality education in early grades in Chipinge, Zimbabwe,” the authors conclude that CSE is essential in empowering early grade children with skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to protect them from sexual abuse.

The rest of the articles in this general issue relate to various facets of higher education. “Publishing (mal)practices and their (re)colonising effects: Double affiliations in academic publishing” exposes the misuse of the South African subsidy system for institutional financial gain through double affiliation. Double affiliation has gained substantial momentum, especially within the university ranking systems, but there are (un)ethical issues that may have been driven by econometric drivers in an ever-increasing neoliberal higher education system. Continuing with the discourse on decolonisation, the article, “Decolonisation, knowledge construction, and legitimation at African universities in the 21st century: Relevance of François Lyotard,” based on a desktop review, theorises a possible philosophical grounding for knowledge decolonisation in universities. Then, on transforming higher education through the lens of vice-chancellors, the authors of “‘In the trenches’: South African vice-chancellors leading transformation in times of change” present nine vice-chancellors’ accounts of leading transformation in the institutions they have led.

The final articles in this issue focus on teaching and learning within higher education studies. The author of “The inclusions of critical thinking in an accounting curriculum: Students’ perceptions” argues, using a mixed method design, that students do benefit from the inclusion of soft skills into the teaching and learning processes of an accounting curriculum. The final article contributes to the post-Covid-19 teaching and learning experiences in higher education. The author of “An empirical analysis of the impact of mobile instant messaging for collaborative learning during a Covid-19 lockdown in a rural-based university” makes an argument in favour of the use of mobile instant messaging for teaching and learning, especially in rural-based universities, because it yields positive results for collaborative learning.

The issue closes with a book essay review, “Light on the shadows,” of Mark Bray’s (2021) monograph, *Shadow Education in Africa: Private Supplementary Tutoring and its Policy Implications*.