

## Editorial

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As an intellectual field, curriculum studies in South Africa is fragmented and in its infancy (see Pinar, 2010). There are no journals or conferences dedicated to curriculum studies and much of the scholarly work that has been produced on matters related to curriculum in post-apartheid South Africa has focused on policy making and implementation, giving rise to what Pinar (2011) calls “the problem of proximity” (p. 106). The upshot of all this is a field that is under-developed with practitioners not always able to address the curriculum issues that need to be discussed.

This special issue on curriculum studies is the first one to be produced by the special interest group (SIG) of the South African Education Research Association (SAERA). The SIG was established in 2014 so as to advance the field in South Africa. In line with the SAERA 2017 conference theme of decolonisation, the focus of the SIG meeting was on the decolonising of the curriculum. What emerged from these deliberations was the need to explore the points of dissonance and resonance between and among constructs such as Africanisation, indigenisation, and internationalisation that are often bandied around loosely in conversations on decolonisation. We believe that exploring the nexus between and among these constructs could contribute to reimagining the field of curriculum studies in South Africa.

For this special issue we were looking for papers whose authors might advance the discipline of curriculum studies while taking cognisance of the current discourses and debates relating to binaries, contestations, illuminations, and possibilities. Internationalisation, indigenisation, decolonisation, and Africanisation are shaping debates in education globally and locally. Contributors were invited to complexify, demystify, and disrupt discourses such as those

surrounding internationalisation, indigenisation, decolonisation, Africanisation, and other related concepts as they relate to curriculum studies.

Twenty-four authors submitted abstracts in response to the call for papers and fourteen were invited to submit full papers. We considered philosophical and empirical articles that employed a variety of methodologies in the focal areas of higher and teacher education, science and mathematics education, and schooling. Following the process of double-blind review, six of these papers were accepted for publication. An additional paper that was submitted to the *Journal of Education's* Special conference issue (No. 72) was included here because of its strong alignment with the theme of the special issue.

In the first article le Grange explores the conceptual connections between and among the constructs of Africanisation, decolonisation, indigenisation, and internationalisation and how this conceptual work might open up ways for re-imagining the field of curriculum studies in South Africa through the notion of curriculum as complicated conversation. He points out that the advancement of the field in South Africa is dependent on curriculum scholars engaging in such complicated conversations. For le Grange, scholars should be committed to exploring and participating in the intellectual life of the field, even if such commitment is done in disagreement with others.

Du Preez's article deals with the complicated relationship between the decolonisation and internationalisation of university curricula. She argues that decolonisation and internationalisation are not opposites and that there are constructive contentions between the two once we think about the transformative potential of university curricula. To further her argument, she draws on Rosi Braidotti's *The Posthuman* (2013). She argues that the ontology, epistemology, and ethics of undergraduate university curricula should be considered carefully if we are to bring about meaningful transformation in higher education institutions.

Maistry and David, in their article, review extracts from four Grade 12 economics textbooks used in schools. They suggest that the screening of textbooks by the state for use in schools focuses largely on ensuring that no overt prejudices relating to race and gender, for example, are apparent while their covert ideological hegemony goes unchallenged. In an examination of the discourses of globalisation in these economics text books, Maistry and David discuss how such discourses perpetuate neoliberalism and its practice as normal and acceptable.

Ronicka Mudaly explores how Western epistemic frameworks normalise the current pre-service science education curriculum. In her process of disrupting this normalising discourse, she called on an Indigenous Knowledge expert to teach her pre-service teachers who then also created and maintained a garden of useful medicinal plants. This initiative demonstrated how indigenous knowledge can be integrated into the formal curriculum. The responses of these pre-service teachers to Mudaly's questionnaire showed that by consciously endorsing indigenous knowledge systems in having them taught by an expert in this area she had shown them the value of integrating these systems into the curriculum.

Writing in relation to the higher education curriculum, Vimolan Mudaly argues for a re-orientation away from Western knowledge systems that devalue indigenous African people. He argues against the heavy reliance on colonial ideals that has come to dominate the higher education curriculum. In his attempt to have his postgraduate education students indigenise the teaching and learning of mathematics, he had 20 practising teachers create, implement, and reflect on a teaching unit on mathematics that valued indigenous knowledge. While acknowledging that some gains were made, he reports that these teachers found it difficult to shift from the comfort of teaching factual mathematics.

In their article, Müller, Motai, Nkopane, Mofokeng, Lephatoe, and Mouton argue that anti-oppressive education, integral to the social justice project, could be a useful theoretical departure-point when one is moving towards the decolonisation of the curriculum. They employed a collaborative narrative research methodology to foreground the lived experiences of a group of postgraduate education students at the University of the Free States as they explored issues of social justice in the curriculum. They conclude that a decolonised curriculum cannot come from the top down or be imposed on educators but should emerge from the educators themselves based on their past experiences of injustice.

In the last article, Koopman focuses on the concept of infusing both indigenous knowledge and Western science into the school science curriculum and explores how teaching strategies can be decolonised in the context of science education. He argues that the advancement of indigenous knowledge in science education programmes is possible only if Western science is domesticated. He provides very useful practical examples of how this can be achieved in the science classroom. He argues that personal-cultural-localised learning (PCLL) and process-oriented guided-inquiry learning (POGIL) are productive strategies that could be used to bridge the cultural divide between Western science and indigenous knowledge in these classrooms.

## References

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