

Editorial

The contributions to this volume of *Perspectives in Education* present a collection of serious and insightful critical essays in the field of education. These articles are skilfully woven through a wide range of discussions that are both internationally resonant and conceptually relevant in education discourses. Discussions in this volume incorporate and intermesh both theory and practice, and it is only by doing this that success of research may benefit the process of teaching and learning. The volume draws on an eclectic mix of research design and methodologies.

The first two contributions to this issue of the journal provide an insight and value in professional development. First, in their article, “*Institutionalising teacher clusters in South Africa: Dilemmas and contradictions*”, **Loyiso C. Jita** and **Matseliso L. Mokhele** argue that in South Africa many provincial education departments have sought to institutionalise and encourage the formation of teacher clusters as a substitute for traditional approaches to the professional developments of teachers. This article shows the dilemma of this approach that led to undesirable outcomes. They conclude by arguing that the noble idea by the Department of Education has turned bureaucratic and has alienated teachers; however, their ending note is a promise for teachers to reclaim their spaces. Secondly, in their article “*Training as a tool for community development: 25 years of experience in sparsely populated rural areas in Cuenca, Spain*”, **José M. Díaz-Puente**, **Francisco José Gallego Moreno** and **Ramón Zamorano** amplify the subtle training methodologies of community development in rural areas and these methods are used by training bodies not adapted to the peculiarities of rural areas.

Joining the chorus of voices in the ongoing debates and discussions regarding how best to create optimal conditions for excellence and quality in teaching and learning, **Vimolan Mudaly**, in his article appropriately entitled “*Diagrams in mathematics: To draw or not to draw?*”, describes the use of diagrams in mathematics as self-explanatory tools and how these diagrams help in dealing with problem-solving. In her article “*Constructive deedback as a learning tool to enhance students’ self-regulation and performance in Higher Education*” **Erna du Toit** draws our attention to constructive feedback that can develop students’ self-regulatory skills, to enhance students’ learning and improve academic performance. The effectiveness of a first-year course in qualitative literacy is shown in **Vera Frith’s** article, “*A quantitative literacy course for Humanities and Law students: The challenges of a context-based curriculum*” which explores intervention strategies necessary to assist students in developing appropriate quantitative competencies. She argues that there is an articulation gap between quantitative literacy of first-year Humanities and Law students at a South African university. She concludes by proposing explicit clarification between disciplinary contexts and the mathematical and statistical content. The autonomy of scientific investigation is taken by **Umesh Ramnarain** in an article entitled “*Exploring the use of a cartoon as a learner scaffold in the planning of scientific investigations*”. This article examines how a cartoon can be used in a Grade 9 Natural Sciences class to promote learners plan investigations. Findings in this study show that a cartoon with an extended dialogue between characters on science concepts is an effective support mechanism to engage in the scientific discourse.

The final contributions to this volume have Higher Education as a focus. In their article, “*From clinic to classroom: A model of teacher education for inclusion*”, **Elizabeth Walton** and **Gillian Lloyd** address the challenges associated with the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. This article reflects on the pilot years of a postgraduate course in inclusive education developed at a South African university, using the concept of “*inquiry-as-stance*”. They conclude their argument by stating that teachers need to develop a collaborative and classroom-based knowledge-of-inclusive practice by implementing, reflecting on and theorising inclusive pedagogies. **Ana Naidoo**, in her article “*Leading curriculum renewal in a Faculty of Education: A story from within*”, explores the process of curriculum renewal. The author reflects on her experiences as the initiator of change to the Bachelor of Education curriculum and how the final curriculum was negotiated with staff members and its compliance with the Higher Education Qualification Framework. In their article entitled “*I want to publish but...: Barriers to*

publishing for women at University of Technology”, **Andrea Garnett** and **Fathima Mahomed** explore experiences of community of practice of female academics with regard to academic publishing. They maintain that barriers to publishing are not compounded by gender.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who contributed to this volume and the peer reviewers prior to our editorship.

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