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Editorial

Lesley Wood

Director Community-based Educational Research (COMBER), Faculty of Education, North-West University

Lesley.Wood@nwu.ac.za

This seventeenth issue completes the eighth year of publication of *Educational Research for Social Change*. My fellow editors and I began the journal to promote research for and as social change—research that enables people to grow and develop through their active participation in the process. However, eight years down the line, this approach to research still appears to be an exception, rather than the rule. We continue to receive article after article that merely report on findings from data gathered from “participants” who have little say (or even interest?) in what the researcher deduces about their lives. And we continue to reject about 90 per cent of articles submitted for publication, simply because they do not meet the scope of the journal. This leads us to wonder if education researchers in general are not conducting participatory forms of research, or are they are doing it but not writing about it? *Educational Research for Social Change* is one of the few journals that target this kind of research, but we still struggle to attract suitable articles grounded in educational *research* for social change. Given that the journal is listed in Scopus, the preferred database of most South African universities, it offers an attractive outlet for this form of research. As editors, we will have to think carefully how to attract more papers—from South Africa, and from international researchers.

Nonetheless, we have six articles in this issue that advance our understanding of research for and as social change. Individually and collectively, they demonstrate the potential of small-scale research endeavours to change the thinking, and thus ultimately the practice, of larger groups of people. Like Margaret Mead (Howard, 1984), we believe that change must start with individuals, and that research that enables this to happen is research for social change.

In their article, “Science Teacher Inquiry Identity: A Comparative Duoethnographic Study of Canada and Ethiopia Viewed Through a Bourdieusian Lens,” McPherson and Nayaranan from McGill University, Montreal, Canada report on a duoethnographic self-study of their practice as science teachers, comparing their experiences in a developed country (Canada) and still developing contexts (Ethiopia and India). Despite geographic, socioeconomic, political, and cultural differences, they found many similarities in the problems they faced. They narrate how their respective self-studies enabled them to better understand these challenges, and find ways to improve their teaching of science to make it more context relevant and student-centred. They used a Bourdieusian lens to interrogate their practices, which enabled them to question traditional doxa in curriculum policy and to learn new ways of teaching. This self-study research design was an effective form of professional development, outside of the usual (less effective) forms of professional development.

Still on the self-study theme, the article, “‘I Recognised That I Needed To Look Searchingly at My Own Teaching’: Storywork as a Self-Study Method for Educational Research for Social Change,” by Madondo, Mkhize, and Pithouse-Morgan illustrates how storytelling, an indigenous research practice,

enables critical reflection on practice. As a pedagogical tool, the crafting of personal stories can help teachers to make their teaching more contextually relevant and opens up "possibilities for taking a simultaneously appreciative and critical stance on stories of the past, with the educative intention of contributing to educational and social change."

The third article, "Liberating the Oppressed Consciousness of Preservice Teachers Through Critically Reflective Praxis" by Liebenberg, Bosman, and Dippenaar, explains how the authors' research brought about change in the consciousness of preservice teachers through enabling their development as critically reflective practitioners—they created opportunity for preservice teachers to reflect on their own practice. And they adopted a narrative inquiry approach, using questions to deepen critical reflection by students to heighten their consciousness of how their pedagogy could better promote social change. The research enabled preservice teachers to challenge their own assumptions about learners and so adapt their teaching to make it a more engaging experience. Teachers occupy a powerful position in society given that they influence the thinking, and mould the personalities, of young people—so it is crucial that they are able to critically reflect on their teaching to ensure it promotes social justice, rather than perpetuating inequalities, biases, and stereotypical thinking.

In "Body Mapping as a Critical Pedagogical Tool: Orientating Trainee Psychologists Towards Addressing HIV and AIDS," Frizelle demonstrates how a simple exercise such as body mapping can significantly help trainee psychologists gain a deeper and more critical understanding of HIV and AIDS from a social justice perspective. Her research indicates the effectiveness of arts-based methods such as body mapping, both as a critical pedagogical strategy and as a data generation tool to enable students to appreciate the intersectionality and complexity of the pandemic. She concludes that, although this approach alone cannot bring about substantial change in the way psychologists are trained, the findings do demonstrate the need to rethink traditional pedagogical approaches to the development of practitioners whose practice will be more responsive to the (unjust) lived realities of those they aim to help.

Kalungwizi, Gjøtterud, and Krogh report on research conducted in Tanzania to ascertain how power relations impacted on the sustainability of a participatory action research approach aimed at integrating environmental education in the curricula in higher and basic education. In their article, "Democratic Processes to Overcome Destructive Power Relations and Sustain Environmental Education in Primary Schools: Implications for Teacher Education in Tanzania," they conclude that action learning and action research are indeed useful approaches for levelling power relations within a hierarchic education system. They argue that participatory action learning and action research should form the basis of teacher education to enable more democratic and community-based responses to the urgent issue of climate degradation—and, indeed, to any social problem. This research provides strong evidence of how participatory forms of learning and research in teacher education could help to educate about the need to take action to address issues that threaten the quality and sustainability of human life.

The last article, "Youth as Participatory Action Researchers: Exploring How to Make School a More Enabling Space," moves away from teacher education/professional development to focus on the "end users" of knowledge generated by educational research. Mathikithela and Wood recount how they facilitated a youth participatory action research study to enable learners in a rural secondary school to make their school a more enabling space. Using visual methods, the learner-researchers identified social, emotional, and structural factors that were impeding their optimal learning and development. The youth then used the artefacts generated by the visual methods to raise awareness of the issues among the wider school community, and to advocate for change. They were successful in persuading other learners, the school governing body and management, and teachers to join them in addressing

and eliminating some of the challenges they identified. The participatory research process had benefits for the personal growth of the participants, as well as positive outcomes on a micro-policy level. This research for and as social change provided "a potentially powerful pathway for learners to be involved in improving their own holistic wellbeing and resilience through learning to become advocates for change." Importantly, the authors also highlight potential barriers when youth take on an advocacy role that exposes improper behaviour on the part of authority figures, and that challenges established ways of doing things within a hierarchic system.

This edition closes with a book review and conference report. Delia Marshall reviews Talita Calitz's latest book, *Enhancing the Freedom to Flourish in Higher Education* (2019), which was based on research conducted for her award-winning thesis. Capability theory is particularly suitable as a framework for research for social change, and the research findings are translated into strategies for supporting much needed epistemological and institutional transformation in South African universities. Fotheringham and Zuccala report on the 2019 BLOSA (Blended and Online South Africa) Inaugural Blended Symposium. An interesting aspect of this conference was the attempt to "unconference" the event by making it more interactive and accessible to all, rather than the usual elitist format of keynote and paper presentations. Blended learning is a pedagogical approach that changes how knowledge is created and disseminated, both within and beyond the academy.

References

Howard, J. (1984). *Margaret Mead: A life*. New York, USA: Simon & Schuster.