

Editorial

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The Independent Journal of Teaching and Learning (IJTL) was established as a result of identifying a gap in scholarly publications at all levels of education for researchers, academics, practitioners, and policymakers in South Africa. The aim then, as now, is to provide a forum for reflective education practices and innovation. The incorporation of research articles at the different levels of education in one publication is important. It allows for the system to be viewed holistically. Any education system has to be flexible and dynamic in order to adapt to the ever-evolving needs of society, which are typically driven by new knowledge and innovative technology.

The World Economic Forum Report of 2016 suggests that 65% of children entering primary school now will be employed in jobs that do not yet exist. This has major implications for all levels of education. Exponential technological advances, especially those in the field of artificial intelligence, mean that attributes and skills such as creativity, critical thinking, and complex problem solving are needed in order to flourish. Students also need to learn skills of self-reliance, flexibility, and embrace the joys and rigours of lifelong learning in order to have fulfilled lives, be able to participate successfully in the global economy, and be critically engaged active citizens. These skills and attitudes cannot only be inculcated during higher education study. It is a way of 'being and doing' that needs to start at the earliest stages of non-formal, informal and formal learning. This is yet another reason for the journal to continue embracing its bold philosophy of non-segmentation of the education system.

In this first edition of 2018 - 13(1) - the journal boasts an eclectic mix of articles yet all are united in their commitment to enhancing education and the student experience whether it be at the higher education or school level. This can be seen in, for instance, the examining of the robustness of the use of a particular research methodology in master dissertations; the unspoken yet real expectations that teachers have of students in teaching practice; and pedagogical approaches in teaching and learning in both schools and higher education institutions. Of particular importance is the learner in the rural school. If our education system fails at this point, the rural child is severely limited in his or her life choices. This edition underlines the connections between the different layers of education.

The use of appropriate methodology is the cornerstone of rigorous research hence the methodology has to be clearly stated and its use justified. If it is not suitable for the project in hand then the reliability and validity of the results are in doubt. In the first paper, the author is concerned about the rising use of case study methodology in master dissertations and the criticisms surrounding its use. He investigates the robustness of this method using content quantitative analysis with respect to 86 successfully completed

master's dissertations at three South African universities during the period 2013-2015. He finds that a number of methodological issues need to be addressed if the results of such studies are to be trustworthy. He makes recommendations that include the development and implementation of specific guidelines for case study research to ensure it is fit for purpose.

The next three articles deal with teaching and learning. The use of electronic assessment rather than paper-based assessment in the module End User Computing is the focus of the first. The author concludes there are benefits and disbenefits to both practices and so suggests that a blended method of assessment could be optimal. The need for further studies is acknowledged. In the second of these three articles, the author is concerned about the high number of students who do not complete their higher education studies. She reports on her use of an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning to address this. The research shows the potential of this method in creating critical thinkers and guidelines for implementation are provided. While the next article explores digital story telling in schools, it could also be of interest to higher education practitioners. The findings show that this approach can foster student reflexivity and critical thinking. Although there are challenges with this pedagogical approach, it is worthy of further investigation.

The following three articles all have implications for teacher education. In the first, a case study is used to determine the expectations that teachers have of students during teaching practice. The findings show that there is a gap between the students' craft knowledge and teacher expectations. This requires the review of the teacher education programme; its aims and intended learning outcomes as well as providing awareness sessions to schools to ensure alignment of understanding. In the following article the authors conduct much needed research into conceptions of teaching and learning in rural schools. A strong correlation is found to exist between teachers' conceptions of learning and their conceptions of teaching. This is an area that needs attention. The third article in this cluster deals with teacher education and the underpreparedness of graduating teachers to teach in rural schools. A work integrated learning approach is investigated which results in a number of recommendations being made including those for the teaching education institutions and the Department of Basic Education and education districts.

In South Africa as elsewhere in much of the world, adolescent exposure to violence is a too frequent phenomenon. In their article in Practitioner's Corner, the authors through a qualitative study explore the role of care and support for such young people so that they achieve academically. Whilst they find positive correlations between good support and achievement, the authors conclude that although support can foster academic achievement there is no generic formula; support needs to be carefully tailored to each individual circumstance for success.

The Doctoral Corner comprises five abstracts of recently awarded doctoral degrees in areas such as: archiving and curation of knowledge, teaching and learning, management models in teacher training colleges, leadership in working class schools, and women leadership in disadvantaged schools. The publication of these alert researchers and practitioners to new research in their areas of interest.