

## EDITORIAL

In this July 2013 issue of *Yesterday&Today* we have not only included contributions related to the main focus areas of the journal – research articles, hands-on articles and book reviews – but also added a review article. The editors want to extend a special invitation to all our readers to submit contributions to be considered for possible publication in the next, and future, issues of the journal. Submissions related to the following themes are welcome:

- History teaching, which refers to research reports dealing with the methodology (didactics) and practice of History teaching.
- Educational history, where the history of any education-related theme is reported.
- History research, in terms of any theme from the History curriculum of South Africa. It is recommended that all the contributions should be related to either the GET, FET or HET curriculum content. The themes should also be linked to ways to utilise the latter in education in general, and the classroom in particular.
- Hands-on reports, which are based on authors' personal experiences with history within or outside the classroom.

The articles published in this issue are focusing on history and nation-building in South Africa, the pre-service and in-service education of History and Social Sciences teachers, an important historical figure from South Africa's educational history, and the status and value of history of education in South Africa.

In the first article entitled, *Mobilising History for nation-building in South Africa: A decolonial perspective*, Morgan Ndlovu argues that one of the greatest challenges facing South Africans today is that of building a cohesive national identity out of diverse and competing national, cultural and ethnic aspirations and identities en route to a single nation-state. The liberal democratic values (diversity, tolerance and various forms of freedom) of the post-apartheid dispensation have brought about an impediment to the cultivation of the spirit of patriotism, common belonging and unity among the people meant to become South Africans. The question of knowledge production and its divisive role in the making of South Africa has not yet been comprehensively

addressed. Ndlovu argues that this gap needs to be addressed urgently with special reference to the field of producing historical knowledge. For him, the manner in which historical events and narrative are imagined and reconstructed in South Africa today has the potential to constrain and/or enhance the common belonging. This article also offers a decolonial epistemic perspective on the production of historical knowledge in South Africa. It also recommends that a decolonised historical narrative can possibly lead to the emergence of a cohesive South African national identity.

The article by Pieter Warnich and Louisa Meyer, entitled *Trainee teachers' observation of learner-centred instruction and assessment as applied by History and Social Sciences teachers*, focuses on the application of learner-centred instruction and assessment in History and Social Sciences teaching. In a small scale empirical study of trainee teachers' observation to what extent History and Social Sciences teachers have adjusted from their predominantly traditional educational paradigm of transmission pedagogy and passive learners to different learner-centred instructional and assessment practices which emphasise the responsibility of learning to actively engaging learners. The findings revealed that although the teachers showed a willingness to utilise some of the learner-centred instruction strategies, their tendency to implement traditional teacher-centred instruction strategies were much stronger.

Boitumelo Moreeng's and Erna du Toit's research report, *The powerful learning environment and history learners in the Free State Province*, also deals with the active and critical approach to learning. They focused on the concept of Powerful Learning Environments, and reported on a quantitative study which was conducted in schools in the Free State province to establish the extent to which History learners are exposed to the different characteristics of a PLE. Their findings revealed that the History learners were exposed to different aspects at different levels. They concluded that all the learners responded positively to the aspects of a learner-centred learning environment; however, there is a need to improve on the extent to which the learners are exposed to the community-centred learning environment, knowledge-centred learning environment and assessment-centred learning environment.

In the article, entitled *Presentation Technology as a mediator of learners' retention and comprehension in a History classroom*, Sonja Schoeman argues that although technology has been placed in the hands of History teachers little training was provided on how to adapt the technology to the needs of

the school subject History. In an attempt to address this issue, the opinion of History teachers on the role of presentation technology as a mediator of learning, and the format of more history-friendly PowerPoint slides to maximise History learners' long-term retention and comprehension, was sampled using a qualitative intrinsic case study. Johnson's history-friendly PowerPoint pedagogy was put forward to promote interactivity and discussion during PowerPoint slide shows.

Johannes Seroto in his article, entitled *A revisionist view of the contribution of Dr Eiselen to South African education: New perspectives*, discusses the philosophical ideology advocated and promoted by the academic, anthropologist and politician, Dr WMM Eiselen, during different periods in the history of South Africa. The primary focus was on the ideology that influenced Eiselen's academic writings, and the consequent influence of the academic knowledge on government theory and practice. It was pointed out that themes such as language and ethnic culture had a significant influence on the development of the Bantu Education system. It is argued that Eiselen's pronouncements and writings should be understood in terms of what was happening during that particular period of South Africa's history.

In a review article, written by M Noor Davids, and entitled "*Can Foucault come to the rescue?*" – *From Dogma to Discourse: Deconstructing the History of Education for democratic subjects*, Davids ponders on the history of South African education that is still very much a suppressed and subjugated discourse hidden in the minds and experiences of the people, and that the history of education is in a state of decline. She argued that the history of education went through a period of decline with the emergence of a new regime of truth. It is recommended that as a way forward, a possible departure from existing ways of understanding the history of education by introducing innovative conceptual and analytical lenses to construct an alternative approach to history of education. She proposed that the use of a self-reflexive historiography methodology, and the deconstruction of existing meanings of historical events can be used to produce new discourses of truth. Davids grounded her argument in Foucault's methodology.

Apart from the above contributions, included in this issue are also three interesting and thought provoking book reviews. Finally, important information regarding the 2013 SASHT Research Report and SASHT Conference Programme are also provided.