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Editorial

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Placing accepted articles in the public domain as quickly as possible and preparing the *Journal of Education* for real-time publication of accepted articles, has necessitated publishing two issues this quarter so this issue of the journal will come out within a month of the previous one.

The articles published in this general issue span a range of domains in Education in focusing on TVET education, higher education, and school education. In the article "Moving beyond vocational qualifications: A Freirean perspective on the transformative path of vocational education" Ezekiel Majola highlights how employment-oriented models often fail to address broader issues of inclusion, agency, and social justice. In attempting to address the persistent challenges of TVET education, the author demonstrates how participatory and humanising pedagogies can reposition vocational education as a site of empowerment rather than mere skills training.

In their article on "Cultural influences on self-directed learning among African students: An Ubuntu-informed educational inquiry" Mbali Tsibuli and Charlene Du Toit-Brits engage with the concept of self-directed learning (SDL) in higher education and conceptualise an Ubuntu-informed SDL framework. Continuing with this theme, Olukayode Solomon Aboderin and Doniwen Pietersen, in their conceptual article, "Humanising artificial intelligence for enhancing engagement and retention in open and distance learning in sub-Saharan Africa" examine how humanising AI can be embedded into ODeL design to strengthen dialogue, agency, care, and belonging. Their key finding indicates that explainable learning analytics, intelligent tutoring systems, adaptive feedback, and conversational agents can personalise student support and identify early disengagement.

Extending coding and robotics into inclusive teaching practices, Lucia Hartnick, in her article, "Coding and robotics for inclusive education in South African higher education teacher training contexts" advocates for coding and robotics to be part of inclusive education in South African higher education teacher training contexts. They show that, when critically adapted, such tools can promote equitable participation and support learner-centred pedagogy.

Contributing to the on-going debates on early learning, Rosemary Brien and Nicky Roberts offer "Emergent number sense: A blended learning approach to supporting first year pre-service teachers." Using the platform of Maths4Primary Teachers Intervention Project in investigating the development of mathematical fluency and understanding of emergent number

in pre-service teachers, they advocate for a blended-learning approach to strengthen initial teacher education.

In their article, "How do Grade 12 EFAL learners use grammatical references to enhance cohesion in their essays?" Mzamani Steven Khosa and Hlaviso Motlhaka use a case study to show how the use of grammatical references enhance cohesion in students' English essays. Continuing with a focus on strengthening learning, Hlologelo Climant Khoza and Amelia Abrie in their multi-case study article, "How life sciences teachers use discursive moves to support learner meaning-making: An analysis of opportunities and gaps" explore teachers' discursive moves in teaching population ecology.

Mia le Roux and colleagues, in their article, "Correlations of auditory discrimination, phonemic awareness and literacy: Evidence from Grade 4 learners in a rural Gauteng primary school" tackle the issue of Grade 4 learners' transition, with a focus on auditory discrimination, from first-language instruction to English as the language of learning and teaching. They show correlations between auditory discrimination and spelling and reading speed.