

Editorial

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Having now completed a year as the editor of the *Journal of Education*, I begin by reflecting on the advantages and challenges of being an editor of an accredited and indexed journal. Some of these advantages include having been exposed to the wide and diverse range of educational issues that are impacting on education in general and, more specifically, in South Africa. Reading almost every article that was submitted to the journal exposed me to the breadth and depth of educational issues that need spaces, like the *Journal of Education*, for articulation and engagement. This exposure to the breadth and depth of issues relating to education enabled me to enrich my engagement with potential authors of manuscripts for this journal. Often, as editors, we are called upon to engage with academics on what to write about and on how to prepare manuscripts for publication in journals. The challenges of being an editor are numerous, including dealing with efficient time management to cope better with the plethora of things a senior academic is expected to do as an active academic citizen. Other challenges include attending to reviewing processes, mediating between and among differing review comments, dealing with authors' queries and concerns, and managing the on-line platform on which the journal is located.

The *Journal of Education*, since its indexing on Scopus, has seen a rise in the submission of manuscripts, especially from authors beyond the borders of South Africa. This is welcomed by the journal's editorial team since it signals the growing global presence of this journal. The widely circulated phrase "publish or perish" continues to pervade the academic terrain with higher education institutions institutionalising both sanctions and rewards to propel and dictate the agenda of scholarly publishing; this agenda is perhaps the reason for the increase in global submissions to this journal. While this trend may be seen as good for knowledge production, what gets published, who publishes, how reviewers review manuscripts, and who does so, are emerging concerns raised in the scholarship on academic publishing (Tomaselli, 2020). These concerns are what I have noted during my first year as editor of this journal. Some of them relate to the quality of articles submitted, responsiveness to review requests for the manuscripts we receive, the quality of these reviews, and to the increasing number of submissions that are not within the scope of the journal. In each of the editorial notes for the *Journal of Education* going forward, I will engage with some of these emerging concerns to illuminate the issues that editors of journals face and will attempt to explain why these issues continue to exist, along with possible solutions to them.

In this final general issue of the journal for 2022, the articles address a range of educational concerns. There are articles that focus on topics like teaching, learning, and assessments, links between education and the world of work, sexuality education, teacher education, and one on a dedicated lecture on academic freedom along with a comment on it. This collection of diverse articles speaks to current and on-going educational issues, not only relative to the South African context, but also to global discourses and debates.

The article, “Randomized control trials in education (RCTs): What is their contribution to education theory about teaching?” introduces five multi-pronged interventions to improve early grade reading in three developing countries. This topic is of global concern in improving reading and comprehension skills. Keeping to the theme of improving the quality of education, “Exploring the use of assessment for learning in the mathematics classroom” engages with feedback as a way of enhancing classroom teaching. Focusing on teaching competence, “Life Orientation teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge and skills in using a group investigation cooperative teaching approach” advocates for further research on group investigation in in-service Life Orientation teacher education.

“A new feminist materialist analysis of girls and the sexual violence assemblage” brings to the fore Deleuze and Guattari’s (1998) concept of assemblage as a perspective from which to engage more deeply on dominant gendered scripts that illuminate issues of agentic possibility for girls in schools while “Parents resist sexuality education through digital activism” addresses the concerns raised by parents about the appropriateness of sexuality education in this country. The author’s use of Facebook to gather data on this issue indicates that it is essential that we teach young people skills that will enable them to manage their sexuality.

A group of papers focuses on career decisions, vocational education and training, and on graduate employment. In using correlation studies, the authors of “Influence of selected social factors on career decision-making of grade 12 learners” show that the social influence of teachers and siblings on career decisions have been found to be quite strong. “In search of teacher professionalism: TVET teachers’ ‘dual narrative’ of professionalism” shows that *required* professionalism differs from *enacted* professionalism and seeks to understand how NC(V) lecturers in Engineering Studies and Business Studies accommodate or resist the institutionalised professional culture of TVET colleges. Then, “Is education blithely producing unemployed graduates? A reflection based on a review of environmental skills initiatives (2016–2021)” discusses the view of the Black Business Council that what our education system continues to produce is unemployed graduates.

This issue closes with articles that focus on higher education. “Sink or swim: Exploring resilience of academics at an education faculty during Covid-19” highlights the demands placed on academics in responding to the demands of a changing higher education landscape during the Covid-19 lockdowns in relation to resilience and points to the need for further research on and engagement with the notion of resilience. The final two articles relate to the T.B. Davie Academic Freedom Lecture that was presented by Yunus Ballim in 2021 at the University of Cape Town. In “The place of teaching, learning and student development in a framework of academic freedom: Attending to the negative freedoms of our students” he addresses issues of negative and positive freedom. The issue ends with a response to this article in which its authors call for further exploration into the conceptualisation of student agency and into the questions relating to the intersection of academic freedom and the relationship of the university to society.

Reference

- Tomaselli, K. G. (2020). Peer review is academic citizenship. *South African Journal of Science*, 116(9–10), 1–2.