Editorial

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South Africa is facing a crisis of critical proportions with the ever increasing incidences of school violence: learners' violence has been targeted at other learners and teachers, and several cases of teacher murders by learners have been reported. This is compounded by the recent increase in Value Added Tax (VAT) from 14% to 15% and the subsequent hikes in fuel costs. South Africans are currently paying more for fuel than ever before with fuel hikes impacting negatively on economic growth and continuing to put low-income households under greater financial pressure. In the context of the weak economy, poor rand value, poor service delivery, rampant violence, and lack of jobs, South Africans are bound to lose hope in the possibility of a better future.

Children growing up in this context are in dire need for an education system that can enable them to make it out of these challenges, an education that can give them a sense of hope, and build them towards improving their economic situations and that of the country. The call for free and decolonised higher education by South African students is evidence that students are aware of their mis-recognition in untransformed institutions of higher learning, which, instead of redressing the injustices of the past are perpetuating the same.

In this issue, Cherrington provides us with a review of the book, *Responsible Research Practice: Revisiting Transformative Paradigm in Social Research*, by Norma R. A. Romm who argued that:

> *researchers should not shy away from recognising their influence in shaping the world of which they are part (and not a part); it is this recognition that should prompt them to try to energise action (their own and that of others) in a responsible way, rather than denying that research is already—wittingly or unwittingly—an impactful event. (2018, p. 24)*

Thus, I believe, Romm (2018, p. 14) is spot-on in saying "researchers have a responsibility to gear the research process towards disrupting discourses and actions which arguably contribute to perpetuating inequality." I hope the articles herein will shed some light on how Romm's sentiments can be effected.

In setting the scene, "Trends and Patterns in the Use of Grounded Theory in Educational Research in South Africa" by du Plessis and van der Westhuizen argues that research and knowledge development traditions in education have not contributed in significant ways to enhancing cognitive justice in society. They explore trends and patterns in research published between 1994 and 2016 in order to understand how grounded theory methods contribute to the development of new education theories and to transformation. Based on their findings, they discuss the role of educational research in the changing times of decolonisation and argue for an improved educational research that is relevant and transformative.

Building on the argument that research should be relevant and transformative, in the second article, "A Critical Look at a Technologically Sophisticated Initiative to Address the Problem of Unequal Educational Opportunities in South Africa," van Jaarsveld and van der Walt highlight the challenges still prevalent in the South African schooling system, and discuss the possibility of collaborative and sustainable partnerships between privileged and poor schools to address apartheid educational injustices. Using an example of a technologically sophisticated initiative, they state that although the project has been well meant by its initiators, and although it already has benefited some 38 underprivileged schools since 2008, it is a stark illustration of the persistent disparities in the South African education system. Thus they argue that projects of this nature should be built on a stronger recognition of the complexity of the different school contexts as well as of the challenges embodied by these contexts—with particular focus on the cultural competencies of all involved in order to realise their transformative potential.

In the context of disadvantage and lack, immigrants face an extra set of challenges in trying to access education in host countries. Isseri, Muthukrishna, and Philpott explore the experiences of academically high-functioning female immigrant learners studying in South African schools to understand how they navigate schooling. In their article, "Immigrant Children's Geographies of Schooling Experiences in South Africa," they state that despite the struggles the students experienced regarding language, bullying, discrimination, and cultural barriers, they took a positive stance and developed a strong sense of self-efficacy and determination to succeed. Thus the resiliency and agency of the young learners enabled their success. The social capital they possessed as a group was found to be a key player in shaping the schooling experiences of the learners. The study illuminated the networks that support the academically high-functioning learners socially, emotionally, and academically—for example, parents, family members, friends, and youth groups.

On the other hand, in the article, "Perceptions of Immigrant Nigerian Women in South African Higher Education About Social Change," Potokri, Noah, and Perumal explore the educational experiences of immigrant Nigerian women in higher education in order to understand how they view and respond to social change. They employ materialist social theories to argue that understanding social change requires beginning with the conflicts and collaborations of men and women who work, fight, and procreate in order to survive in social and political systems. The authors found that social change relates more to economic relationships between self (individuals or group) and society in terms of materialist theory where survival of the people in any society is linked to surplus economic goods and the acquisition of tangible and intangible wants in order to deal with the fear of the unknown future. Thus they conclude that the understanding of self, being a fallout of social change, is a means of understanding others and vice versa, which equally can help people, especially locals or indigenes, conquer their fear of foreigners or immigrants. The two articles therefore show that despite the challenges that immigrants face in host countries, they have a strong will to survive and achieve their academic and materialist goals.

Using a literature survey, Dube and Hlalele contribute to ongoing narratives surrounding school violence in South Africa through their article, "Engaging Critical Emancipatory Research as an Alternative to Mitigate School Violence in South Africa." They employ critical emancipatory research to critique school relations and map skewed relations that exacerbate school violence. The authors discuss the principles of social justice and social transformation as critical elements of mitigating school violence and eliminating false consciousness. They therefore argue that critical emancipatory research has the impetus to forge new dimensions of, and responses to, conflict resolution—and to lessen school violence.

Continuing the discussion on violence, Ntshangase's "Men's Perceived Powers to Destroy or Rebuild Women's Lives: Analysis of Gender Stereotypes Portrayed in *Uthando Lungumanqoba*" uses feminist literary criticism to challenge gender stereotypes portraying men as a powerful species that can either destroy or build the lives of women, within the context of the novel, *Uthando Lungumanqoba [Love Conquers All]*, by Maphili Shange. The author discusses how gender stereotypes and the abuse of women nearly destroyed the life of a young girl in the novel. Ntshangase argues that the woman author of the novel allows the character of Phindile, a young girl who lost both her parents at the age of 17, to be rescued from the clutches of poverty and prostitution by a man named Thulani—which shows how gender stereotypes have equally infested the psyches of both men and women. Therefore Ntshangase challenges the traditional norms of gender constructions through the lenses of the postapartheid South African values of equality, social justice, and human rights. The author attempts to illustrate the misalignment between the South African democratic ideals of social cohesion and the social realities of oppression within the heterosexual gender binaries.

Continuing the discussion on gendered identities, "Vulnerable Femininities: Implications for Rural Girls' Schooling Experiences in Swaziland" by Motsa takes a look at how girls perform gender to navigate the challenges associated with schooling within patriarchal contexts. Motsa used a qualitative narrative inquiry methodology with girls aged between 12 and 16 years to understand how they construct their femininities. The findings denote that poverty and vulnerability were strong determinants of the girls' constructions and performances of gender Thus the paper raises consciousness on how understanding and addressing the schooling plight of girls who are vulnerable (as a diverse social group), could be a useful strategy for social change and improved gender equitable relationships in schools.

Nyamupangedengu and Mandikonza's "Using Students' Experiences of Lectures as a Lens for Learning About Teaching Pre-Service Teachers: A Methodological Approach to Transformative Practice Through Self-Study" takes us on a different journey into the higher education classroom and teacher education. They argue that few higher education institutions have training or induction programmes that prepare academics to teach pre-service teachers. They therefore ask how academics develop and ascertain teaching practices that are appropriate and effective for teaching pre-service teachers. In this self-study, Nyamupandengu and her critical friend Mandikonza used the community of practice theory and the metaphors of boundary crossing and boundary objects to interrogate her teaching and students' learning using students' experiences as the stimulus for reflection. The study revealed that pre-service teachers take on multiple identities of teacher, learner, and university student during teaching and learning activities, which influence what they learn. The authors therefore argue that the pedagogical choices that teacher educators make can hinder meaningful learning if they are not aligned to students' identities. They also state that investigating, and critically reflecting on students' experiences of lectures, can be an effective methodological approach to understanding effective practices for teaching and preparing pre-service teachers. Their conclusion advocates for decolonised classrooms in order to make them safe spaces for critical dialogue that allow students' voices and experiences to be heard.

The last article, "Green Sprouts: Transformative Learning in Learning Through Participation (LTP)," by Sakinofsky, Amigó, and Janks takes us into the higher education setting in Australia where they explore the transformative learning effects of university courses that integrate academic learning with practical experience. They state that enhancing the relationships between universities, industry, and community organisations is a growing priority for the tertiary sector around the world, towards education for sustainability. Sakinofsky et al. highlight the tripartite learning that occurs when students work collaboratively with external partners as well as their university lecturers, and they propose that university student placements have great potential to lead to sustainable transformative learning. They conclude by proposing a four-step model that can be used by students, their teachers, and

placement supervisors to scaffold the critical reflection process during an experiential learning placement.

This volume ends with a project report, "Life History, Identity Construction, and Life Ambitions of Basotho Herders," by Selloane Pitikoe that outlines the sociocultural position of Basotho males and the implications of herding on their access to education and, hence, argues for a need to review Lesotho's non-formal education (NFE) policy and practice such that Lesotho's herding indigenous knowledges are documented and mainstreamed within the NFE provision.

References

Romm, N. R. A. (2018). *Responsible research practice: Revisiting transformative paradigm in social research.* Cham, Switzerland: Springer.