Editorial

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This Special Issue of the *Journal of Education* reflects on the SAERA 2023 conference on the Education(al) Foundations, Education(al) Futures in South and Southern Africa. At its core, the conference theme posed the question: How do and how may education(al) foundations (that are already in place, or being envisaged) shape education(al) futures, or not? The theme served as a potent call to action for educational researchers in South Africa. It compelled us to examine critically the existing educational practices, acknowledging both their successes and, importantly, the systemic barriers that hinder learners, educators, and leaders. This theme underscored the need to move beyond colonial legacies and embrace innovative approaches that cater to the evolving needs of South Africa and the African continent. The emphasis on regenerative African futures prompted us to consider how education can empower future generations to address pressing challenges such as climate change, technological advancements, and socio-economic disparities.

This Special Issue offers a collective exploration of novel pedagogical approaches, curriculum design frameworks, and technological integrations that align with the vision of a reimagined education system. It highlights the importance of inclusivity, decolonisation, and

social justice in shaping educational futures, thus reflecting the call for a more equitable and transformative educational experience for all. As SAERA members, and guest editors of this conference-based Special Issue of the *Journal of Education*, we are delighted to present a collection of 12 papers that address the theme of Education(al) Foundations, Education(al) Futures in South and Southern Africa. We thank the authors for their submissions and, equally importantly, the many reviewers who contributed so willingly to the rigorous review process.

The first paper in this Special Issue is drawn from Saleem Badat's SAERA 2023 Mandela lecture, "Commodification, Corporatization, Complicity and Crisis: The University in Contemporary South Africa." In this paper, The University in Contemporary South Africa: Commodification, Corporatization, Complicity and Crisis, Badat offers a sobering look at the state of higher education in South Africa and notes that to build the future we desire, we need to know all about the current situation and the forces that are shaping the space.

Lesley Le Grange, in The Many Sides to Performativity, in arguing that performativity is polysemous, explores the various meanings of performativity, suggesting that they create alternative opportunities for being and becoming. These interpretations, he argues, could counter the technology of performativity in the neoliberal university.

The paper by Ackhurst et al., Working with Adults towards Systemic Change, to Meet Learners' Needs at Various Phases of Education, offers a metastudy of three case studies. The authors use a bioecological model to determine which mechanisms can be leveraged to allow a way through a schooling system that is resistant to change. They offer useful insights into ways to work towards possible futures.

There is substantial current awareness of the issue of multilingualism in South Africa. Sekoai Elliot Nkhi looks at pedagogical translanguaging in higher education institutions in Lesotho. His paper, Is Pedagogical Translanguaging a Panacea to the Colonial Monoglossic Language Ideology in the Classroom? Focus on Higher Education in Lesotho, draws on a qualitative study that involved three lecturers and sixty students. The key finding is the capacity to promote social justice through the use of plural languages.

Rinquest and Simba, in Beyond Intentions: Problematising Policy-practice Challenges for Inclusive Education and Social Justice in South Africa, draw on Nancy Fraser's theory of social justice to examine critically Inclusive Education policies, positioned in global frameworks in South Africa. The authors share valuable insights for fostering inclusive educational environments that align with global aspirations while acknowledging unique South African realities.

In Examining the Role of ESD in Strengthening Inclusive Education in Teacher Education: A Vygotskian Analysis of Change Projects from Malawi and Eswatini, Ben de Souza describes two case studies from the Sustainability Starts with Teachers program. Both cases deal with pre-service teacher training and use Vygotsky's theory of social learning. The case in Malawi

looks at including training on environmental sustainability and in Eswatini the focus is on access for people with disabilities.

Douglas Andrews's paper, Sustaining of Knotworking as a Teacher Professional Development Strategy, considers the use of Engeström's knotworking heuristic. He describes a study at an independent primary school in which he follows up on a previous intervention to explore the lasting effects of introducing a knotworking approach. He finds that this approach can lead to sustained practices and the retention of new knowledge.

Mashite Tshidi and Alton Dewa turn their attention to the needs of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. They offer a review paper, The Promise and Peril of Coding & Robotics Education in South Africa: Can Teacher Preparation and GenAl Deliver Equity? that explores the ways in which coding and robotics must be included in teacher development. They conclude that the use of generative artificial intelligence is important to prepare learners for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

In Teachers' Beliefs about the Relevance of the Mathematic Curriculum given Emerging Societal Crises and Knowledge Demands, Sarah Bansilal et al. discuss their use of an online survey and interviews with participating teachers to explore their beliefs about the relevance of the curriculum in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and seek to identify the changes needed to improve its relevance.

As indicated in the title, We're Going to Sit with a Generation who Cannot even Construct a CV Because They Can't Bloody Read: Reading Interventions by English Teachers, the research focus of Denton et al. is on teachers' practices in relation to how they teach reading post COVID-19. In their interpretivist qualitative research study on the teaching practices used by EHL and EFAL Intermediate Phase teachers, they note that English teachers are "compelled to adapt their teaching practices to ensure that the gap between learners who can and cannot read does not increase."

Michael Naidoo's paper, Optimizing School Leadership Development for 21st-Century Learning: An In-Depth Analysis of South African Private Secondary Schools in KwaZulu-Natal, focuses on the 21st Century's affordances of information and communication technology. His interest is in the development of leadership and in exploring familiarity with different leadership theories among school leaders in KwaZulu-Natal.

Celestin Mayombe's paper, Applying Experiential Learning Theory in Non-School-Based Technical and Vocational Education and Training for Unemployed Youths in South Africa, is informed by a qualitative study that drew on interviews with, and observations of, a group of young trainees. His findings reveal the importance of classroom-based and field-based experiential learning approaches in developing job-related skills and competencies required in the labour market.

The collection of papers in this Special Issue are illustrative of the range and scope of education research in Southern Africa. In returning to the conference theme of *Education(al)*

Foundations and Education(al) Futures, we note that opportunities to interrogate education at all levels in South and Southern Africa, and work towards improving it, abound. What is needed is sustained, intentional collaboration. We hope that the readers of the Special Issue will pause to consider whose work most resonates with them, and where strategic alliances may be made for the good of all.