Editorial

This issue of *Perspectives in Education* has an interesting collection of national and international contributions. All the contributions deal with the field of education and provide a collection of perspectives on important educational issues, including gender and human rights concerns, challenges in higher education, teacher development, and the application of new educational technologies in schools. Discussions in this volume incorporate both theory and practice, and draw on a wide range of research designs and methodologies.

South African national education policy is committed to promoting gender equality at school and to facilitating the successful completion of all young people's schooling, including those who may become pregnant and/or are parents while at school. In the first two timely, thought-provoking articles in this edition of *Perspectives in Education*, leaders in the field of gender research in collaboration with colleagues examine the plight of those who became pregnant and/or are parents while in school. Drawing on qualitative research involving a group of teachers and principals at 11 schools and 26 learners who are parents at school, in Cape Town and Durban, **Tamara Shefer**, **Deevia Bhana** and **Robert Morrell** argue that dominant moralistic discourses on adolescence, normative gender roles and female sexuality, perpetuating the representation of teenage pregnancy as social decay and degeneration, underpin negative responses to learners. In addition, the school is constructed as a space where pregnancy and parenting are unintelligible. These discourses are shown to be experienced as exclusionary practices by some learners. The article emphasises the need to address the larger ideological terrain that impacts on the successful implementation of policy, and recommends support for teachers in the challenges of providing meaningful guidance, constructive support and appropriate interventions in the nurturance of pregnant and parenting learners. Continuing this theme, the article by **Deevia Bhana** and **Sithembile Judith Mcambi** shows how, in a Durban school, young women's experiences are situated within discourses of shame and stigma. Such shame works to reduce their agency and increase their vulnerability to drop out of school. The article argues that the experience of pregnancy and parenting is highly gendered, and that addressing the challenges requires a commitment to gender equality and justice. Some implications for schools are suggested in the conclusion. Whereas the first two articles in this edition examine the vulnerability of pregnant and/or school-going parents, the third article interrogates the gender-based challenges faced by Zimbabwean secondary school girls in their academic and occupational prospects. **Edmore Mutekwe** and **Maropeng Modiba**'s qualitative study among 20 Sixth Form girls found that, as part of the hidden culture curriculum, teachers' perceptions, attitudes and expectations of pupils' gender roles exert a significant influence on their academic achievement and career aspirations. This study concludes that effective intervention strategies are imperative if the Zimbabwean school curriculum is to be made gender-sensitive.

In their contributions to this edition of *Perspectives in Education*, Angelopulo, De Hart as well as Venter, Niemann and Niven joined the ongoing debates on challenges faced by academics and students at South African universities, and discussions on how best to create optimal teaching and learning conditions at higher education institutions. **Rita Niemann**'s article theorises about applying Engeström's learning theory to teaching at Masters level in order to address the academic demands at this level as well as foster essential capabilities. In this theoretical article, a possible framework is proposed for teaching students in a coursework programme in Higher Education Studies. The framework is based on re-conceptualised principles of expansive learning as a means of addressing the demands for producing graduates, who will possess both academic and social capabilities. The framework is an attempt to contribute to the conceptualisation of teaching as a process and a product by providing guidelines for integrating theory and practice. In this regard, it is focused on both addressing the quest for academic rigour and embedding capabilities, valuable for human development. Whereas Niemann's study considers teaching at the Masters level, **Penelope Niven**'s article explores the situated nature of the epistemological values of a social science discipline as it finds expression in teaching first-year students. Although it explores Becher and Trowler's anthropological conception of disciplinary 'territories' and 'tribes' ([1989]/2001), it finds

deeper resonances in Trowler's (2009) more recent notion of 'teaching and learning regimes'. It begins to identify some of the regimes that characterise one Political Science department, but discovers that these are unstable and diverse, suggesting that, in practice, there are very few unifying 'tribal' values or uncontested 'territorial' practices at work in this context. The study offers these observations on the basis of an ethnographic account of one intellectual community doing the work of inducting first-year students into a new discipline. It has a particular focus on lecturers' perceptions of the resources and capabilities of beginning students, describing some of the lecturers' frustrations with early students' literacy practices. These are metaphorically represented by the notion of 'taxi rank analysis', that is, many new students' tendency to emotive opinions based in experiential, local knowledge rather than the more guarded, grounded analyses of academic Political Science. Finally, the study considers some of the implications these descriptions could have for more responsive teaching and learning regimes in the social sciences. **George Angelopulo** uses Q methodology to categorise the variety and span of subjective opinion on the market-related, service quality and cultural variables that support or undermine student participation in the academic programmes of the Department of Communication Science at the University of South Africa. Eight richly diverse accounts were derived, reflecting the most salient perceptions on the topic. Underlying factors that supported student enrolment and retention were the reputation, credibility and image of the university and the department, and specific academic, disciplinary, technical and administrative competencies. The main factors that undermined enrolment and retention were the scope of research and tuition, institutional performance, inconsistency in teaching quality, and the relative inaccessibility of tuition material. **KL de Hart** and **JMP Venter**'s study investigates the effect of urbanisation (of the area in which a student resides) on the dropout rate of distance students in an introductory taxation course, using Kember's longitudinal-process model of dropout from distance education as a point of departure and interrogating the "characteristics" of students. Recommendations are made for specific interventions that could assist in supporting students that are prone to dropout.

Francine de Clercq and Rachel Phiri's article examines the challenges of teacher development strategies in post-1994 South Africa, by arguing that school-based development initiatives address teachers' specific development needs and that it is imperative to understand the conditions under which these initiatives can have a positive impact on teachers. A framework is developed in order to examine why teacher development initiatives evolve over time and why teachers do not benefit equally from these.

South African educators are mandated by international and national law to observe and promote human rights. However, given the realities of the limited teaching time available, educators cannot fulfil this obligation solely by teaching the curriculum. **Susan Coetzee** and **Cathrine Mienie** argue that another avenue needs to be found for educators to fulfil this obligation. Educators are also mandated to follow a positive discipline approach, but they still find it difficult to accept this mandate. The authors contend that the mutual inclusivity of these mandates might hold the solution to both these challenges. It provides the avenue needed for educators to fulfil their human rights mandate because, by implementing positive discipline, human rights are invariably observed and promoted. This is so because positive discipline is grounded in human rights. In their article, the authors aim to explain the mutual inclusivity of these mandates to illustrate the fact that, by adopting a positive discipline approach, educators will be fulfilling their theoretical obligation to promote and observe human rights and will thus be making these rights a reality.

In the last contribution to this volume, **Djurdjica Komlenović**, **Emilija Manić** and **Dušica Malinić** report on their quantitative investigation into the application of new educational technologies in geography classes in Serbia. Results from the study suggest that the Geographical Information System (GIS) and other ICTs are still not fully used and that teacher presentation remains the dominant method, which includes less innovative didactic aids. The importance of the application of the GIS in teaching and suggestions for enhancing teacher motivation to apply this technology are discussed in the conclusion.

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