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EDITORIAL

It has often been said that South African citizens continue to regard poverty, unemployment and social injustice as the key challenges to be met in order to build a healthy nation. The recent incidences of violence, vandalism and looting has, to a certain extent, been blamed on these three factors. In the opening article, Langa, Wassermann and Maposa regard the views of middle-class Black African parents who did their schooling under apartheid and who are parents of high school learners in contemporary post-apartheid South Africa. These parents are adamant that their children should not study history. This was partially rooted in their own apartheid-era schooling experiences. For the most part the Black African parents tried to live their unfulfilled dreams and ambitions through their children by getting them to study science and mathematics as this was directly linked to upward-mobility, middle-classness, prosperity and success.

We then shift our lens to another topical issues, vis-à-vis the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on education. In the first of the articles that address this concern, Motsa discusses the educational implications of COVID-19 for the vulnerable children of Eswatini by indicating that in a bid to contain the spread and infection rate of COVID-19, Eswatini closed all its schools on 17 March 2020 and the schools remained closed for an entire year. The closing of schools set-off to heighten prevailing educational disparities towards academic access, experience and achievement for the vulnerable children of the country. But children are not the only ones who have been negatively affected by the pandemic. Maphalala, Khumalo and Khumalo look at student teachers' experiences of the transition to online learning during the COVID-19 lockdown at a South African university.

The transition to online teaching and learning by universities and institutions of higher education, is of course clouded with controversy as academics and students engage in the transition. This is well captured in the research of Govender, Reddy and Bhagwan on the academic and psychosocial challenges of Health Sciences students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Several broad themes capturing the disruption students experienced within the context of their academic life emerged from the data: their personal



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fears and anxieties, struggles with online learning and connectivity issues and challenges studying remotely at home. An even greater controversy surrounds the transition to the use of technology in schools. Rwodzi and De Jager refer to the claim that, for the most part, teachers in South Africa are not pedagogically capacitated to teach their respective subjects using technology. As an emergency strategy during and after the COVID-19 outbreak, remote teaching was seen as one of the initiatives taken by resilient English teachers in resource-constrained township secondary schools in South Africa. Conclusions drawn support the fact that focusing on digital literacies in the English classroom supports proficiency in the use of the language. Participation in online learning programmes and utilisation of digital platforms provide learning opportunities for English learners in resource-constrained secondary schools. Looking at the challenge from a different subject context, Motsoeneng, Nichols and Makhasane studied the challenges faced by rural accounting teachers in implementing web-based collaborative learning. The findings reveal that accounting teachers are faced with myriad challenges that serve as a stumbling block in their attempt to implement web-based collaborative learning.

One of the strategies often found useful in the teaching of subjects remotely is the use of YouTube videos. Kibirige and Odora argued that understanding the effects of various multimedia technologies on students' cognitive achievement is essential in this technological era. They focused their research on exploring the effects of YouTube on technology education students' cognitive achievement in a mechanical system module. Another challenge that has gained importance during the age of online teaching relates to plagiarism or students copying from the web in their assignments. This has resulted in institutions introducing software packages, such as Turnitin, to verify the similarity of assignments to other documents found on the web. But what are students' feelings about the online submission of assignments using Turnitin? This question is addressed in the article by Mtshali. The study found that participants viewed this method of submitting assignments as a crucial aspect of developing student consciousness about the importance of speedy and safe delivery of assignments in ways that promote academic honesty.

As always, *Perspectives of Education* presents various perspectives on teaching and learning in numerous contexts and across a variety of subjects. Authors present us with insightful results based on their research into these matters. In this edition we have included articles on the teaching of mathematics, English, Life Orientation and Commerce. We have also included articles on schooling as well as on higher education. We have included contributions from numerous countries, thereby broadening the spectrum of perspectives in education.

We hope that you will find this volume of *Perspectives in Education* insightful and enriching and that it will contribute to the discourse in education in various meaningful ways. Enjoy the reading.