

*Editorial: On the end of the year, reflections, and celebrations*

December provides an opportunity to take stock, celebrate achievements and accomplishments, or simply celebrate making it from January to December. The end of the year is often a time to reflect on what we have accomplished and experienced throughout the year. Such reflections can span the continuum of joyful, painful, to just being. While this issue was not conceptualised as a call for reflection, the submitted papers serendipitously provide for such moments. Analysis of the papers in this issue can be categorised as introspection on various teaching and learning issues. The papers are varied in terms of topics and research approaches. However, the one commonality is the reflection on decolonisation as it interfaces with the practice of teaching, researching, and the broader role in the higher education space.

The first article by Chimene Nukunah and Neil Eccles, 'Decolonising management education: An empirical study', aims to recenter the call for decoloniality in higher education, specifically management education. The authors argue that work on decoloniality has recently been eclipsed by the focus on research on innovative topics such as the fourth industrial revolution and research on how COVID-19 has impacted higher education. Using a constructivist grounded theory approach, the paper shares findings from interviews with participants in the management education space on how to decolonise management education. Drawing on themes from the data, the authors propose a tentative conceptual framework for constructing a meaningful decoloniality movement in the context of management education.

In 'Rethinking comparative politics in the context of debates about decolonising higher education', Sally Matthews explores the question of curricular decolonisation in relation to comparative politics. The author details attempts to change the course in the light of debates on decolonising the curriculum and shares reflections on how Eurocentric orientations among students can limit the impact of the intervention. The paper is anchored in the transformative imperative that characterises South African higher education institutions, where one of the main aims is to ensure that university curricula are responsive to the contexts in which they exist and to ensure that such curricula recognise and include knowledge created in various places and from multiple perspectives.

In 'Afrocentricity and decoloniality in disciplinarity: A reflective dialogue on academic literacy development', Oscar Oliver Eybers engages in a transformative method to revise an academic literacy study guide in a humanities faculty in South Africa. The researcher employs qualitative interpretive methods to gain valuable insights into how academic literacies can be framed within Africa's rich indigenous knowledge systems. This study's transformed academic literacies text maintains its previous structure while adopting discourse, Afrocentric, and decolonial paradigms. Revisions aim to align with disciplinary discourses and critical thinking and to prepare students for nuanced literacies required in the Humanities. The researcher aimed to



inspire literacies facilitators to adopt a transformative discourse, Afrocentric, and decolonial methodology.

In their article titled 'Locating Academic Development within the decolonial turn in Higher Education: The affordances of systems thinking for decolonial practice', Bongzi Bangeni, Riashna Sithaldeen, and Aditi Hunma reexamine the call to decolonise Higher Education (HE) which was a prominent feature in the #FeesMustFall movement. Arguing for a reconceptualisation to decolonisation approaches that consider the interplay between policy, structure, and practice, the article presents a reflective case study that argues that adopting a systematic approach may hold promise to the imagined decolonial future.

In 'Foregrounding relational dimensions of curriculum and learning design in online and hybrid learning environments', Arona Dison and Karen Suzette Collett reflect on a five-year collaborative project focused on embedding student academic literacies development within the modules. Employing a DBR approach,

the paper reflects on the curriculum and learning design principles which informed a collaborative intervention between Writing Centre staff and an Education lecturer as they strengthened the embedding of student academic literacies development in a Bachelor of Education Honours module, both prior to and during COVID-19 remote learning conditions.

Hlologelo Climant Khoza and Eunice Nyamupangedengu in their article, 'From a student to a teacher educator: Becoming better acquainted with my new professional identity through self-study', reflect on the process of acquiring a teacher educator identity, which can be challenging, as one transitions from being a student of teaching to being a teacher. In this self-study, the primary author uses data from a reflective journal coupled with a discussion with the second author, who is also the mentor. This study showed that acquitting and being comfortable with the new identity of a teacher educator requires re-visiting and interrogating one's past experiences, interacting with experienced teacher educators, continuous reflections on experiences of practicing teaching, and perhaps most importantly, reflecting on the actual activity of teaching independently. The article illustrates that acquiring a teacher identity is not a once-off endeavour that ends when one attains the degree; instead, it is an ongoing experience that may need continuous engagement with a mentor, even post-graduation.

In the paper 'Relational Reading~Writing~Thinking~Becoming in Higher Education: Possibilities for scholarly reading and writing in times of turbulence', Belinda Verster, Carolien van den Berg, and Karen Collett share experiences from their writing community that predates COVID-19 but were nonetheless impacted by it. The authors show how the COVID period, characterised by constant Zoom meetings, led to experiencing a loss in the quality and depth of engagement and what they termed 'disconnected-connectedness'. Using a collaborative autoethnographic approach, the authors conceptualise a 'pandemic-transformed' approach to

reflect on what happened during COVID but also as a way to find their way back to 'an authentic, creative, and joyful engagement' collaborative reading~writing~thinking~becoming process.

In 'A timely question: How can we not talk about becoming a professor in the context of a neoliberal and decolonising higher education?', Emmanuel Mfanafuthi Mggwashu shares personal experiences and critical reflections on becoming a professor. The author argues that the pressure to account for 'market-friendliness' and to respond to the transformation and decolonisation imperatives due to massification impact on the knowledge project makes it necessary to revisit, reimagine, and readapt the role of a professor. A major takeaway is that higher education needs an intentional, conscious professoriate reflexive on how it nurtures the next generation of knowledge-generation academics capable of resisting the hegemony of instrumental reason and the continued normalisation of the supremacy and infallibility of Euro-American knowledge-generation traditions that continue to shape various fields of studies.

Being an academic can sometimes feel like a constant race of moving from one space to the next, either fighting for relevance or constantly innovating to avoid the dreaded stagnant label. Being reflective, however, is critical to ensure our work is anchored in a strong foundation. The practice of reflectivity can take many forms, as illustrated in the articles presented in this issue. Reflexivity can be concerned with methods used to conduct research; sometimes, it can be about our epistemological assumptions and other times, it can be about our disciplines. This intensely intentional and personal work can be challenging but vital if our work is to be about impact instead of simply chasing shiny new things. The articles in this issue provide new knowledges and examples of the need for, and how to, reflect as a way of moving forward and advancing our fields.

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