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Editorial

Africanizing Educational Research and Practice

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This issue is dedicated to the late Wolfgang Nitsch, Professor at Oldenburg University, Germany, Honorary Professor at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa, and one of the initiators of the East and South African-German Centre of Excellence for Educational Research Methodologies and Management (CERM-ESA) at Moi University, Kenya. In addition to being a critical intellectual, Wolfgang Nitsch was a passionate educator and political activist who dedicated his life to building partnerships and networks across southern Africa and Germany to uplift education for those on the periphery of society. His enduring commitment to decolonisation, Africanisation, and social change has inspired many students and educationists in both the global North and the South, and his vision has become the foundation for our collaboration in the CERM-ESA project.

One of the aims of this African centre of excellence is to locate research in African perspectives. This special edition, in part, enables wider dissemination of that aim. The underlying issues in the call for papers for the special edition were: What makes educational research "African"? Are there practices that reflect the identity of the continent? What contributions can African research and practice make to social, cultural, or ecological justice and change? Are there characteristically African responses to globalism in a world that is rapidly becoming interdependent and, often, a more intolerant place in which to live?'

Catherine Odora Hoppers, who holds the Research Chair in Development Education at the University of South Africa, has an honorary doctorate from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, and is a member of the CERM-ESA International Advisory Board, provides the first article in this special edition. Catherine shares her view that the basic premises of both education and development require a new level of action and profound rethinking. She highlights the need for a framework for the rebirth of African research and delineates a distinctive conceptual and analytical lens through which a wide variety of issues can be viewed, reviewed, and judged to promote "inclusiveness and coexistence in the field of knowledge production."

Moyra Keane, Constance Khupe, and Maren Seehawer's paper follows one of Catherine's tenets as they argue for research processes and outcomes that benefit indigenous communities. They present examples that highlight the ways in which researchers can ensure authentic representation and sharing of knowledge, and offer suggestions for strengthening knowledge dissemination and reimagining indigenous knowledge for new generations. In a second joint article, Khupe and Keane offer authentic and nuanced suggestions for indigenous knowledge researchers as to what an African research methodology might be, and then present a brief overview of arguments for research methods

that are consistent with indigenous knowledge systems. Their synthesis of some of the knowledge they have gained in this field in South Africa provides pointers towards creative, culturally relevant, and ethical ways forward for Africanising the research enterprise.

Pholoho Morojele uses photo elicitation as a method to provide an interesting discussion of indigenous knowledge held amongst Basotho herders, which not only helps in terms of understandings of indigenous knowledge, but also points out how misaligned "mainstream" education models can be in many contexts. Marelize Marx and Alette Delport provide evidence that dance in the primary school curriculum could be a method to improve interpersonal relations. The originality of their stance is that of making dance a path to encourage the development of participants' self-identity and sense of belonging, while at the same time inviting and welcoming diversity. Avivit Cherrington's argument for the inclusion of a pedagogy of hope in teacher education provides a framework of levels of hope that includes, among others, notions of relational and collective hope: notions which fall comfortably within an African worldview and offer opportunities for new perspectives within an African research agenda.

Malve von Möellendorff, Susan Kurgat, and Karsten Speck's report on the East and South African-German Centre of Excellence for Educational Research Methodologies and Management (CERM-ESA) at Moi University provides a case for internationalisation and higher education engagement as a route to providing an enabling milieu for Africanising research (see http://www.african-excellence.de/centres/south-africa-kenya/educational-research/). In turn, Kholisa Papu and Malve von Möelendorff's conference report on the First CERM-ESA International Conference: Rethinking Educational Research in African Contexts highlights the perspectives of CERM-ESA members such as Birgit Brock-Utne and Catherine Odora Hoppers in terms of the decolonisation of research in African universities.

Book reviews do not usually make major contributions to journal issues. However, I believe the scholarly and deeply thoughtful review by Michael Samuel of the book, *Africanising the Curriculum: Indigenous Perspectives and Theories* (Msila & Gumbo, 2016) is one that does just that. Samuel uses the title, "Elephants and the Grass," a particularly apt aphorism, for his review. He notes that this book generated personal turbulences that moved him greatly, and points out some of the unanswered questions that many chapters evoke, such as "Who is African?" and whether we can, or should, come to a common understanding of African scholarship (Chikoko, 2016, p. 79).

Samuel provides possibilities and perspectives that challenge and attempt to unlock what may be seen as the current hegemonic narrative on issues of the Africanisation of higher education. He calls for wider ranging views and discussions that provide opportunities for "a dialectical interchange between multiple partners who do not necessarily agree, but who help shape each other." I strongly recommend that you do not put aside this special edition without reading Michael Samuel's perspectives on issues of Africanising, be it the curriculum or research.

References

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