

PREFACE

As an indication of the importance of reading development in southern Africa, this number of *Per Linguam* starts off with three articles on the development of reading at different levels of schooling. The first article by **Broom and Jewson** investigates the suitability of a standardised test of vocabulary and reading comprehension, the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT) for multilingual, South African learners at Grade 8 level. Such investigations are important as a way to enable cross-country comparisons. At primary school level, **Wilsenach** compares learners at Grade 3 level from two contexts: one where English is used as the LoLT from Grade 1 onwards and the other where learners are taught in their home language, Northern Sotho (NS). By investigating the link between phonological awareness and reading, the author shows that NS-speaking learners who develop literacy in their home language outperform NS-speaking learners who become literate in English on all reading measures, in both NS and in English. A perspective from Botswana is provided in the contribution by **Oyetunji**, who looks at reading development at higher education level. Based on a six-week intervention programme that focuses on reading strategy instruction, the author shows that it is never too late to develop and improve reading comprehension.

Moving to the field of academic literacy in higher education, **Olivier and Olivier** discuss the affective factors that influence students' willingness to develop their academic literacy. These results are important for higher education practitioners who often complain of students' lack of motivation. Informing students beforehand of the intentions and aims of such courses may prevent negative expectations and an unwillingness to engage with the content of the course. **Bangeni and Greenbaum** look at the development of writing competence of first-year law students and make recommendations for the improvement of such students' writing within the context of limited resources for sustained engagement with academic writing interventions.

This number is concluded by an article on the orthography of Shona and a book review. **Kadyamusuma and Kadenge** discuss the implications for comprehension of non-tone marking in the orthography of Shona. They show the possibilities of tone marking with reference to Asian languages, concluding that the debate should be re-introduced in Southern Africa. In a book review that links up well with the first three articles, **Diverson Mzemba** discusses Viv Edwards's *Learning to be literate: Multilingual perspectives*.

In this number I would also like to introduce our new Associate Editor, Dr Nanda Klapwijk, who will definitely help to lighten the load and support our web-based submission and review platform.

Christa van der Walt

Editor

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