EDITORIAL

In this number the authors cover three themes: (i) the practice of reading and the development of reading comprehension, (ii) assessment and (iii) the use of electronic devices in language teaching.

We have not included a teaching note for a long time and in this number, we include research by Nkomo that provide very practical guidelines for teachers to implement an extensive reading programme for multilingual learners in the foundation phase.

In the article by **Maree and Van der Westhuizen**, the ways in which talk about reading can support comprehension are investigated. This is important in view of South African learners' dismal results in reading comprehension assessment, as the PIRLS results show. The focus on collaboration to co-construct meaning leads them to conclude that "teachers may develop their comprehension teaching by means of a conversation pedagogy" (Maree and Van der Westhuizen 2021). This article is followed by **Nkomo's** study of a bilingual extensive reading programme in the Foundation Phase. In view of our multilingual classes, articles on bilingual pedagogies are much needed in South Africa and Nkomo shows how this can be attempted. Reading of literature is an issue at secondary as well as tertiary level and the article by **Gazu** shows the many problems that lecturers and students have with reading, comprehending and then writing about literary texts. The availability of summaries and other sources on the internet present too much of a temptation and students often use these sources. Gazu suggests incorporating these sources to comment critically on the actual text, thereby (possibly) facilitating a reading of the original text.

Although it is not strictly focused on reading, the article by **Jjingo and Visser** discuss the problems surrounding the Kiswahili alphabet in the Kiswahili foreign language curriculum. They propose possible procedures for adopting the Kiswahili alphabet in the syllabus to improve the teaching and learning of Kiswahili as a foreign language, based on the principles of grammatical syllabi.

The second theme, that of assessment, has become a contentious issue during lockdown, particularly for online teaching and learning. As **Annandale and Reynecke** show, first-year students struggle with the practice of self-directed learning, which is important when students have to study remotely. Coming from a school culture where they are used to cramming and writing tests and examinations, they are unwilling to actively engage and think critically about the material and assignments presented to them. The article by **Weideman** highlights the responsibility of test makers to act in accordance with a coherent theory of assessment and test design. For the same reason, the focus on the validity of a high stakes test, as described by **Sebolai**, speaks to the responsibility to not only develop assessments, but to also assess these assessments in terms of validity.

In these times where online learning and teaching is becoming increasingly important, the articles on the use of electronic devices and the impact of ICT in low-tech environments are timeous and important. The 'digital divide' is evident in the problems students and learners had this past year to access materials and complete assignments. In the article by **Ngandeu** such a low-tech environment is sketched with its problems and the effects it has on teaching and learning. The conclusion is that teachers need "design thinking capacities as well as knowledge about how to pilot innovation" (Ngandeu 2020). In the article by **Ngoepe** the affordances of mobile technology are discussed, since this is the type of device most students seem to possess. Its potential should therefore be exploited by educators.

We hope you enjoy this batch of articles. Please keep on sending us your work.

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