

EDITORIAL

## RETHINKING TEACHING-LEARNING STRATEGIES AS GLOBAL EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPES CHANGE

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The presentation of Volume 7, issues 1 and 2, December 2021 to readers around the world is another buzz for the editors of *Current Studies in Comparative Education, Science and Technology* (CSCEST). Perceptibly, the CSCEST editorial team has always been pleased to put its journal issues into circulation, but these volumes have showered us with a special kind of excitement – one that is mixed with a healthy bout of well-placed pride. So ‘*why the elation?*’ is a question that is certainly in order. We offer two explanation to this. Firstly, all the papers were presented at the recently concluded 8<sup>th</sup> Annual International ISCEST Conference (01-03 December 2021). Secondly, the authors, who hail from different parts of the world, have defied the odds that the Covid-19 crisis has thrust upon them to give local, regional and international audiences a glimpse into the issues that plague their academic and societal environments. Many of these problems have escalated to the point where they frustrate teaching and learning activities, which in turn retard cognitive, social and emotional and development.

What is clear from the papers presented in this volume is that no education system has been spared from problematic situations as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. Also obvious, are the similarities in drawbacks and a sense of helplessness in removing the obstructions. Education delivery has taken on more than an online appearance. The online activities impact negatively on teachers as well as students. The ‘sudden’ shift to online teaching and learning are affecting learning institutions in various ways, but being socially isolated and having a heavier workload are common negative factors. Godber and Atkins (2021) report on a similar situation in their research work on *COVID-19 Impacts on Teaching and Learning* during lockdown in New Zealand. This editorial does not have the capacity to make mention of all the psychological ravages and the social havoc that have been wreaked on teachers and learners. However, it acknowledges that in trying to continue teaching learning activities, learning institutions’ reliance on technology and the Internet has exposed youngsters to cyberbullying. Of course, cyberbullying is unacceptable, but because of the current Covid-19 situation, this is the kind of risk that schools are forced to take. Ravichandran, Shah and Ravichandran (2020) note two other dangers – domestic violence and child abuse; both put learners under threat because the offenders are in the same home environment. Obviously, it is difficult for children to learn under these intimidating circumstances.

The outlook for education and its institutional activities does look bleak, for the inadequacies of every education system has been exposed (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, 2020). Besides, “there is no one size-fits-all pedagogy for online learning” and every subject area has a different need (Pokhrel and Chhetri, 2021, p.135, ). Perhaps this recognition was lost on governments, who as noted by Professor David Turner in his paper, “... have acted too slowly and done too little...”. Little wonder that students’ stress levels are on the rise. The paper by *Stankovska, Memedi, Dimitrovski and Braha*, which investigated the relationship between stress, anxiety and depression among university students, found that students are exposed to risk of mental health problems; and this interfered with their studying processes and daily lives. Reduced social interaction was a big factor in this regard. This dire situation exists in spite of the fact that “the education space has witnessed a tremendous increase in transnational education transfer” in order to address “the global learning crisis and the Coronavirus pandemic”, that is mentioned in Dr Elizabeth Eta’s paper.

All the papers in this volume speak to pedagogical aspects of education that can share the remedial patchwork for teaching learning processes. *Simos* explores the role of Communities of Practice (CoP) across global Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the need to reshape how information is shared across disciplines, sectors and departments. *Scott* sees the use of critical pedagogy in education as a powerful tool to empower learners, especially those in the English as a Second Language (ESL) realm. *Hackman and Reindl* explains Education Technology (EdTech) as an innovative process that links teaching and learning outcomes. In their investigation into Education Technology (EdTech), they found that access and inclusion, “as well as the use of technologies that are not reliant on the internet or picture-book infrastructure, are frequently overlooked”. To resolve this situation and highlight what EdTech success involves, they offer a five-point proposal that includes looking at pedagogical concerns. *Dickson* draws attention to the fact that women’s entrepreneurial contributions can play a vital role in economic growth and national development. Progress in education are an integral part of these two developmental strands. *Nwokocho and Zifawei* recognises the need for sustainable educational leadership, especially during the current Covid-19 climate. They contend that this type of leadership has the propensity to improve teaching and learning in HEIs.

Two meditative papers share the space in this volume. In their insights on Underrepresented Racial, Ethnic, and Ability Groups (UREAG), *Antony and Akinrinola* make reference to the need for educators to utilise opportunities to improve their academic and professional status. *Akinrinola* contemplates the surge in emigration among Nigerian youths. While acknowledging the negative stereotypes that this brings, *Akinrinola* give some attention to the “increased human capital”, which engenders economic possibilities than can benefit “the overall infrastructural ecosystem of the nation”.

These two issues in the volume cover three aspects – articles, keynote presentations and two reflective pieces. Collectively, the papers pivot on the improvement of teaching learning strategies during a very challenging period in the history of education systems and institutions. The reflections touched on student overall growth and development and professional advancement. Strands of recovery, renewal, advancement and sustainability are interwoven into all the pieces submitted. What comes through quite clearly is the burning desire for educators to remedy the ills of education systems that are drooping under the heaviness of the Covid-19 pandemic and the changing global landscapes. The need for follow-up research work to be carried out in the areas presented in this volume has never been more acute.

## Reference

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