
EDITORIAL

Prof. Joy Papier

Editor-in-Chief

Good colleagues and friends of JOVACET!

It gives me great pleasure to present our fourth edition of JOVACET, Volume 3(1) of 2020. It seems absolutely ages since our launch conference in November 2017, after which the journal took its first fledgling steps in 2018. While it feels as if the time has come for another conference, the global pandemic which will still be with us for some time has put paid to any travel plans for the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, we are heartened by the commitment of our support base, our editorial committee, our reviewers, and the diligent authors who have entrusted us with their academic endeavours in spite of the difficult months we have been through.

In this issue of JOVACET, we continue with the theme of ‘researchable issues in TVET (technical and vocational education and training)’, the range of articles reflecting the global village in which TVET is located. Submissions in this issue span contexts from the north and the south, urban and rural, students and lecturers, education institutions and workplaces.

Garraway and Winberg aptly deal with boundary crossing as they explore curriculum design that embraces expansive learning in a programme aimed at assisting academic staff to bridge work and education contexts in developing their course content. Van der Bijl and Taylor continue the theme of vocational educator development as they undertake a critical analysis of the various conflictual discourses emanating from the need to develop a work-integrated learning (WIL) component of the qualification for educators in adult and continuing education as required by new policy frameworks for TVET lecturers and ACET (adult and community education and training) educators in South Africa. Still on the theme of vocational teacher training, Schüller and Bergami comment on the Teacher Placement in

Industry (TPI) initiative in Australia where VET (vocational education and training) teachers are seconded to companies for a period of time in order to enhance their understanding of industrial practices. The authors explore the views of education managers to gauge their support for the initiative and find that managers believe in the value of the initiative even though resources are inadequate and essential industry links need strengthening.

At the learners' end of the spectrum, the dual contexts of academic learning and work are illuminated in a study reported by Gross, Berger, Wenger and Sauli, set in the dual apprenticeship programme of vocational training in Switzerland. The authors produce fascinating insights into apprentices' perceptions of autonomy and control in the two settings, through the different motivating styles of educators and company trainers.

Much further south, Mabunda and Frick in their article report on a case study of a rural TVET college in South Africa, and the factors that limit employability of graduates in selected National Certificate (Vocational) programmes. In a climate of generally high youth unemployment, TVET college graduates often face challenges in their quest for jobs, but the difficulties are compounded for youths in rural areas where employment opportunities may be even more limited. The authors point to shortcomings that require attention if the employment prospects of these graduates are to be enhanced.

Matenda picks up the baton for another potentially marginalised group of TVET students – women in Engineering Studies. The author applies the capabilities framework to analyse women's experiences as they navigate college and the labour market, juxtaposing their lived encounters with South African policy commitments to social justice and addressing gender equity. The case study concludes that, while women in Engineering have increased in number, there is still much to be done for ideals of social justice to be realised.

In a more reflective contribution, Papier and McGrath review the growing knowledge base in respect of TVET in the south, with a first-cut analysis of postgraduate output over a 10-year period, in the light of the South African policy focus on TVET and increasing support for research in the field. While TVET-related doctoral graduates are relatively few in number, there are positive signs of an emerging community of researchers and of an expanding contextualised knowledge base with respect to TVET. The authors identify a number of aspects observed across the research output which could support and encourage further reflection on the kind of contribution that postgraduate TVET research is making. Their article also draws attention to the nascent cadre of TVET intellectuals who can provide much-needed supervisory capacity in this field.

In closing the 2020 issue of JOVACET, and as an additional feature, we include an interview with the late Adrienne Bird conducted and submitted to us by Prof. Johann Maree. Given Adrienne Bird's sustained contribution to skills development and her passionate advocacy of vocational education, Prof. Maree thought readers might be inspired by her story, conveyed in her own words and in her own inimitable way.

The year 2020 has been an extremely tough year across the board, and we continue to pay tribute to the many dedicated vocational practitioners who have been on the frontlines of the battle against COVID-19, the healthcare workers, safety officers and the like. The resilience of the human spirit has been sorely tested and there is little doubt that the pandemic will leave an indelible mark on all of our structures, our systems, and our ways of doing and being. While there has been enormous loss at so many levels, there have also been some gains which are still to be tallied and evaluated. We look forward to bringing you future editions of JOVACET in which, perhaps, the innovations that have taken place this year in education and training will be reflected upon and our collective learning shared.