

# Editorial

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Community engagement is the third core function of higher education, yet it is often viewed as the poor relation. Research and teaching and learning have first call on resources. This is hardly surprising in that the *raison d'être* of a university is knowledge production and knowledge transfer. Teaching and learning that is underpinned by quality research is highly prized in the academy. Publishing in academic journals, impactful research that influences policy, patenting, and spin-off companies are the stars of the show. Blue skies research is also held in high esteem as it can push forwards the frontiers of knowledge, and practical applications often follow. It is through delivering programmes and awarding degrees that the next generation of academics deepen their knowledge and acquire the methodological tools to conduct meaningful research. This contributes to the socioeconomic development and growth of a country.

Where, then, does this leave community engagement in the academy? Often, it is relegated to outlier status; something adrift from the academic enterprise. In many vision and mission statements, it is an add-on, something that the higher education institution (HEI) does to make a contribution to the society in which it is located and to encourage active citizenship in its students. These are not to be decried. Numerous reports from international organisations, such as the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Development (OECD), have highlighted that for a country's development to be sustainable, there needs to be a quality higher education system that educates the youth both for an active citizenry and the world of work, whether that be as an employee or an entrepreneur. Nevertheless, consideration should be given to how community engagement can be integrated into the other core functions of the HEI to broaden and enhance student learning. This depends largely on how community engagement is conceptualised.

It is, of course, up to the HEI to decide for itself what community engagement means in the light of its vision and mission, programme qualification mix, pedagogical approach and resources. Furthermore, the way that faculties and departments organise community engagement will depend on their respective disciplines but none of this detracts from the need to integrate this function with the others. In the context of COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing and other restrictions mean that creativity is needed in community engagement activities as in the other core functions.

It is refreshing that in this second volume of the 15th edition of the journal the first article reports not only on a community engagement project at a university but also on how it contributes to teaching and learning in addition to social responsibility. This is done through a study conducted on volunteerism. The author suggests that other ways be investigated to use community engagement as learning spaces.

The following article deals with feedback provided to students from two sources: i.e. the tutor and peers. It further considers how feedback is used by its recipients. Rather unsurprisingly, it was found that students accepted tutor feedback uncritically in contrast with that provided by their peers. The latter, the authors argue, leads to self-regulated learning.

In the next two articles, foreign language teaching is dealt with, albeit from two different perspectives and different levels. The first is concerned with the issue of the non-contextualised textbooks used to teach German as a foreign language in a first-year university course. The second is a study on the extent to which teacher/student interaction aligns with the principles of English second language teaching in practice in a Pakistani school.

The next five articles consider various facets of teaching and support in schools. The first is a study of the challenges facing South African school teachers. This is followed by an article which provides evidence regarding the need for teacher-noticing, in the non-trivial sense, for optimal learning to take place. What enables and constrains teachers in science teaching using ICT tools is the topic of the next article. This is followed by research that provides a framework for the development and improvement of computational thinking in a high school with recommendations for its successful implementation. The last article in this cluster considers the strategies used by peer-led groups in providing psychosocial support in schools and recommends that this support be part of the school curriculum with an appropriate budget provided.

In the Practitioners' Corner, the authors conducted an investigation into the use of art in a female rehabilitation centre. They found that art enabled them to develop *inter alia* their creativity and personal growth. The positive influence this has on female offenders suggests that the appointment of creative art professionals would be beneficial for both the offenders and the smooth running of the centre.

Lastly, the Doctoral Corner comprises abstracts of recently awarded doctoral degrees. The publication of abstracts alerts researchers and practitioners to new research in their areas of interest.