

Editorial

Learner and Subject at the Dawn of Digital Research-Led Teaching and Learning in the Time of COVID-19

Johannes A. Smit

ORCID iD: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1792-5256>

Nhlanhla Mkhize

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0088-5780>

Nobuhle Ndimande-Hlongwa

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9597-8690>

Labby Ramrathan

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9963-0675>

I

We can read the first part of the title of this volume of our *Alternation African Scholarship Book Series* in two ways, viz. ‘learner *as* subject’, and learner as subject *in interaction with* an academic subject, in the time of COVID-19.

Important for the focus on *learner as subject*, is to think of both the professor-teacher as learner, as well as the student-learner as subject. With the advent of COVID-19, its social and institutional effects, and the concomitant requisite migration of teaching and learning to online platforms and offerings via digital information systems, technologies and media, professor/lecturer as well as student were repositioned as learners. Therefore, in the wake of the systematic movement from banking knowledge systems (Freire 2007; Moran 2014), where these still existed, to learner-centred knowledge generating

systems of research-led study, we also have to embrace this step of equalising the power balances between lecturing and student engagement of learning, not only with regard to subject-specific problematisations, but especially with regard to the enhanced capabilities required for embracing digital media in online teaching and learning. Consequently, both lecturer and student had to cross the knowledge-power boundary that still separated traditional tertiary in-person, face-to-face teaching and learning, and become interactive learners. It is noted that, in most cases, and because of the under-preparedness of academe to various degrees, these transformations at least initially, took on the forms of emergency remote teaching and learning.

It is true that with the lecturer's assumed superior knowledge and skills in an academic subject, i.e., knowledge power, the balance was still gravitating towards the side of lecturer initiatives. For this, lecturers have had to upskill and enhance the utilisation of digital information systems, technologies and media in online teaching. To note, too is that in these emergency transformations, and due to the rapid increase in the number and upgraded quality and capacity of digital instruments, many of these technologies' full capacities remain under-utilised. Furthermore, the ball is still in the hands of the lecturer-learners to upskill and to continue to learn how to use these technologies to their full capacity and for the full benefit of the qualitative e-Learning experiences of student-learners. Thus, this challenge will remain, and will also remain quite exciting, now that we have passed the crisis and emergency tipping points of the impacts of COVID and teaching and learning of 2020.

On the other hand, student-learners themselves have had to cross the boundary to a very high degree, if not exclusively, to learn from online and/or offline, or by means of digital media learning, during actual presentations, ranging from Moodle, Kaltura, and PowerPoint presentations to digital media accessible via social media, Zoom, Loom, and Microsoft Teams, amongst others. Whilst the exploration and testing of digital technology posed a challenge to optimal teaching use of technology for lecturers, it was even more so for student-learners, especially those who struggled with quality access to online learning lectures and resources, due to data challenges or because of students living in remote areas with weak or limited digital and social media access.

Collectively, this broad-based transformation in teaching and learning also meant that, in most cases, we have had to think further than a blended

learning environment and practice, where we had to rely virtually entirely on the most democratic systems available, such as voice chat, that would reach the greatest number of students, while using the least data, in remote and poverty-stricken settings. For assessment, this reality also posed numerous challenges to remote student-learners, whose only means of test, assignment and task submissions, in some cases, were via cell phone-typed text, and even cell phone photos of hand-written text or remote video.

These are some perspectives on the challenges that all lecturers, as well as student-learners, have had to negotiate, and about which much more has been written on in our AASBS volumes, which focus on *curriculum* (Ramathan *et al.* 2020), *digital learning* (Ndimande-Hlongwa *et al.* 2020); and *teaching and learning* as such (Mkhize *et al.* 2020).

In the next section of this Editorial, we focus on the lecturer-learner as well as student-learner, as subjects, *in interaction with* the academic subject. Even though the digital initiatives also feature prominently in this volume, this volume of AASBS primarily interrogates the nature of the actual details of the transformations, inside subjects, that COVID-19 and the migration to remote online teaching and learning have effected.

II

By the necessary switching to primarily digital teaching and learning, each academic has had to also engage their curricula, and more specifically aspects of their subject content. As is well known, and as numerous studies on TPACK have shown, it is not only competence in technology knowledge (TL) and pedagogical knowledge (PK), that is needed, but also content knowledge. Moreover, it is common knowledge that these knowledges need to intersect, and are often represented in Venn-diagram format (cf. Arek-Bawa & Reddy 2020 in this volume).

Furthermore, and this is the question that we have been raising, and are raising with this volume of AASBS, viz. the transformations in subject content knowledge (CK) in the intersecting with TL and PK, respectively, but also regarding the central intersections of all knowledges combined. On this score, it is to be noted that the volume engages with a *sample of ten subjects* – history, media, graphic design, music and dance, health sciences, commerce education, rural students' studies, differently abled studies, and social work. To note, the volume specifically raises questions regarding the transformations

within the subjects regarding rurality – where there is often even greater poverty than in the city, as well as a dearth of digital technology and data availability, including broadband access – as well as challenges differently abled student learners encounter in the exclusively online teaching environment. These two focuses are most aptly addressed in two chapters in this volume (cf. Myende & Ndlovu 2020; Khumalo, Singh-Pillay & Subrayen 2020, in this volume).

Interactively, each chapter then provides a sample of the considerations that impacted the switch to digital teaching and learning, including pedagogy and/or content knowledge in ten subject areas. They show not only ‘how’ but the ‘what’ academics as learners have had to deal with not only in respect of curriculum, but also, more specifically, with subject matter, or knowledge and content that have to come into play in the new realities of remote teaching and learning.

Many questions still remain. We expect more research to be undertaken on this latter question, focused on the content knowledge transformations of the disciplines and their sub-disciplines that have been and are taking place, as well as questions as to how permanent such transformations are, in the short, medium, and longer term. In addition, to continue to think interactively, we also need to consider how academic disciplines have their own subjectivity, their own agency. These are not cast in stone, and can be historicised usefully if we follow some of the archaeological and genealogical methods in thought that Michel Foucault developed and deployed in his research on the order/s that the history of the subjects that constituted humankind, and in his case, Western man (cf. Foucault [1963] 1973; [1970] 1982; and [1975] 1979 for instance). The question, from this perspective, concerns the nature of the epistemic break that COVID effected in the sciences at the beginning of 2020, in the Human and Social Sciences, specifically in the broader context of decolonial discourse. The volume on teaching and learning (Mkhize 2020) in this series, recent publications in Mkhize and Nobles (2020), on *Afrikan-centred Psychology*, upcoming publications in March (2020), on *Decoloniality and Decolonial Education: South Africa and the World*, and Smit’s earlier ‘#Decolonialenlightenment and Education’ (2017) may provide some pointers.

Furthermore, if we reflect on the concerted efforts that university lecturing staff have made in engaging curricula and knowledge content, and the broadly speaking scientific knowledge field is taken into consideration, the

thinking and deliberations taking place at the outset of the initiation into digital teaching and learning, as well as how these deliberations are continuing, it augers well for the humanities, and humanising subjects. Not only has COVID accelerated the migration to online teaching and learning; it has also opened new vistas of new possibilities that the information systems and technologies have for teaching and learning as such. Therefore, in a nutshell, the African Digital Humanities (ADH) have received a welcome boost over the last year for subjects to migrate onto online platforms, a boost that will be lasting in many ways. As driver, COVID has opened new vistas for thinking and rethinking our disciplines. In view of the challenges posed in real life, under COVID, and post-COVID, the digital humanities' impacts on learner capacity and capability development have been upscaled. Multi-form interactive communication systems are explored and developed in the interests of fostering and developing subject-specific, but also trans-subject knowledge-power knowledge and skills capacities and capabilities (cf. Smit & Chetty 2018a; 2018b; 2018c).

If the above provides a few perspectives on the first part of the title of this volume, then the final part focuses on the nature and dynamics of 'research-led teaching and learning in the time of COVID-19'.

III

The notion of 'research-led teaching and learning in the time of COVID-19' wishes to emphasise the indelible link of research to teaching and learning, and vice versa. Here we wish to make three points.

Firstly, since it is in the nature of the university to teach and learn from knowledge produced through research, and from 'knowers that know' (Nhlanhla Mkhize's term) – not from handbooks produced for the purpose of banking knowledge systems outcomes or rote learning – it follows that all lecturing staff in (South) Africa would have produced knowledge for purposes of teaching and learning as normally required, throughout 2020, the year of COVID-19. They might have taken the impact of COVID to greater or lesser degrees into consideration in such research. Even so, if it had been designed to feed into the continuing development of curricula knowledge content, they should have considered the technological and/or pedagogical challenges and opportunities that arrived with the advent of COVID, social distancing, lockdowns, and remote learning. Much is to be expected across the sciences

pertaining to what has happened, and how the research-led teaching and learning have impacted knowledge content during 2020, and probably into the future.

A closely related perspective is given by the fact that knowledge production is not a single-minded endeavour, or practised by the traditional idea of the lone and solitary ivory tower professor. Rather, knowledge production is a collaborative, interactive, and integratively focused practice in communities of praxis. On the expertly minded knowledge producer and the collaboratively minded interest group knowledge production continuum, COVID-19 requires and catalyses collaborative interaction on joint research ventures within the broad-based space of the equally disruptive impacts of COVID-19 and their problematisations. Research-led teaching and learning take place through knowers that know collectively. This includes lecturers, students, and the communities that universities serve. Responding effectively and through research-led teaching and learning practices to COVID-19 require the utilisation of, and affirmation of cooperative community sustaining and socially supporting educational interactions.

Secondly, there is much evidence – also in the numerous book and journal volumes currently being produced in South Africa – that such engagements of content knowledge are also collaborative and it involved teaching teams and/or inter-, multi-, and trans-disciplinary teams. Colleagues have had to interact in their clusters on how the migration of subjects and courses to online platforms and digital media have generated changes and transformation in the subjects' knowledge content. *How* were the subjects' knowledge contents negotiated, what were the reasons (*why?*) certain knowledge contents and not others were preferred, *who* took the leadership in such endeavours, and *what* were the results and outcomes? What were the (epistemic) breaks that have had to be negotiated, if any, in the discourse inherent to subjects and in the broader discursive formations, also including relevant institutions, foundations, alliances, and associations or scholarly fraternities and organisations. What were the presuppositions – and prejudices – that provided the conceptual and value parameters for such re-negotiations of course content and its pedagogies and technologies? (cf. for instance Sewchurran & Pannach (this volume). Who, indeed, has put up their hands and taken the lead in these endeavours(?), also in some of the emergency re-curriculation and accompanying academic template developments that were required by some universities.

There were some generic concerns related to existing curricula and outcomes requirements. But there were also subject-specific knowledge challenges that lecturers had to engage. These have ranged from actual content in lecturing presentations, actually prescribed materials, which had to be made available online, or had to be replaced with online sites and materials that would be more accessible to students who could not benefit from actual office hours or other face-to-face interaction with lecturing staff in lecture halls or with tutors, and who were also deprived of access to libraries. Therefore, an actual content re-think was required in view of how best to present the subject and its outcome requirements, in teaching and learning, learner enskilling in learning and knowledge production that adds to the knowledge content of subject matter as such, as well as the student-learners' envisioned intellectual comprehension and grasp of the subject matter.

Finally, in our focus on research-led teaching and learning, we raise the matter of history, which also links up with the first chapter of this volume – Noble and Hiralal's 'The Black Death and COVID-19: The Value of Studying Pandemics in Historical Perspective'. The reality of pandemics in world history must be factored into academe in a more consistent and comprehensive way. On the one hand, again, this needs to be factored into how the pandemic impacts our academic subjects and programmes, especially in the inter-, multi-, and trans-disciplinary approaches and inter-disciplinary negotiations of course content and approaches. Research is needed for this. Further research focused on the actual ecological conditions that generate pandemics, but their socio-cultural impacts and responses are also needed. This, again, involves research across the disciplines that deals with forms of ecological focus and problematisation – from the natural sciences, through to history, anthropology and religion, and the arts.

Research-led teaching and learning opens several vistas for research and how researched knowledge production is variously accommodated across the disciplines and sub-disciplines.

Moreover, when looking back on the last few months of the impact of COVID-19 on teaching and learning, research that also needs to be done, must engage the actual *experiences* and *critical* and *constructive reflection* of student-learners. In pre-COVID blended learning discourse, important sets of questions were raised on this matter. Many questions, in addition to those asked in this and other volumes, also related to optimal learning with the assistance of information systems and technology, could be focused on student-learner

views and reflections, not excluding the experiences of their subjects, their professors, supervisors, mentors, and tutors, as we go forward. It is our conviction that COVID has made a profound impact in research-led teaching and learning, that the digital humanities provide a very able and opportune discursive framework for the future of the study and learning of our humanities subjects, and that capacitated and enskilled African humanities scholars of the future will appreciate the remarkable transformative interventions humanities scholars have brought about in the broad arena of the fostering of humanist discourse in the era of 4IR and COVID.

As usual, below, we provide the brief abstracts of the different chapters of this volume, for easy reference.



In Chapter 1, ‘The Black Death and COVID-19: The Value of Studying Pandemics in Historical Perspective’, Vanessa Noble and Kalpana Hiralal reflect on the dramatic effects the rapid spread of the Black Death plague pandemic had on Eurasia in the 1300s and the strong parallels this historical case study has with today’s global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both pandemics had their origins in ‘the East’, devastating communities across Asia and Europe, forcing people into lockdowns and quarantines. It also severely affected the economies of Asia and Europe. However, there were differences too. COVID-19 is occurring in an age of digital technologies, which have encouraged a wider awareness of the disease and its impact than only via word of mouth. These similarities and differences also allude to how societies reacted and responded to pandemics in diverse geopolitical settings, time and space. In addition, a comparative study of Covid-19 and the Black Death through a historical lens considers the value of studying past pandemics for understanding present-day disease challenges. Furthermore, it highlights how past reflections can help to shine a light on contemporary socio-economic problems such as racism and xenophobia.

In Chapter 2, ‘Negotiating the Possibilities Digital Humanities Offers Media and Cultural Studies for Crisis Curriculum Adjustments in the Time of COVID-19’ Anusharani Sewchurran and Franziska Pannach reflect on opportunities and limitations in Media and Cultural Studies, emerging as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown. Media and Cultural Studies

(MECS) curriculum in South Africa traditionally focused on critical or vocational discourses or, in some rare cases, a mix between the two. Vocational training, however, depends on contact, as students do not have access to specialised equipment outside the university space. In such extraordinary times as the COVID-19 lockdown, theoretical portions of MECS curriculum may be repurposed to migrate to online platforms like Moodle, with additional support from WhatsApp messaging, Loom and Zoom. Media educators are confronted with the question of how to replace contact vocational education meaningfully, in this case, Video Production (MECS709). The chapter considers Digital Humanities (DH) as a possible gateway for advancing vocational education without compromising critical thinking. Digital humanities refer to the branch of scholarship using literary and linguistic computing, informatics, making ‘creative use of digital technology to advance humanities research and teaching’ (Gold 2012: ix). Tools for collaborative writing, data visualisation and text mining are explored as the means of developing digital literacy in MECS. Digital literacy is understood in relation to national articulations (NEMISA, *National e-Skills Summit and Research Colloquium* 2018), where one can use technology to one’s own benefit in order to engage actively and productively in the world, the 4IR world. So, using digital storytelling (DST) students will also be asked to respond to content using digital platforms. Digital storytelling ought to be a signature pedagogy for the Humanities, as through this pedagogy, ‘the invisible becomes visible, creating a space for empathic listening, learning and understanding’ (Benmayor 2012: 524). In our context, the focus on digital storytelling could serve as an important intervention addressing the historical invisibility of most communities, as well as the power these stories must reveal structuration of class, race, gender and sexual orientation. Digital humanities, through the field of digital history, enlivens by enjoining the plurality of the living to participate in refashioning history (Arthur 2008; 2015). The second wave of Digital humanities is said to be ‘qualitative, interpretative, experiential, emotive, generative’ (Schnapp & Presner 2009), the qualities which hold the promise of realising digital literacy and educational values.

New challenges present new opportunities for curriculum innovation and transformation. The immediate health crisis in South Africa necessitates a swift but resilient response by Higher Education Institutions to save the 2020 academic year, with many institutions shifting their mode of teaching from face-to-face to online contact. In **‘Resilient Transformation of Studio-based**

Teaching and Learning in Creative and Design Disciplines towards Cognitive Apprenticeship, Yolandi Burger and Ria (H.M.) van Zyl focus on the fact that creative and design studio-based modules might face more challenges than other subjects with this shift in the mode of delivery. Their subject matter still relies heavily on teaching project-based modules through the master-apprentice model in studio environments. The transformation to a virtual learning environment, though, requires of the ‘master’ to recognise the role of theory and evidence-based design activity to transform learning in these disciplines. The cognitive apprenticeship model has many similarities to the master-apprentice model, but it promotes the necessary power shift from the ‘master’ to the student. Such a pedagogical shift requires a collaborative, responsive, resilient, and creative approach with deep empathy for both the student and ‘master’ to ensure the upholding of the integrity of the curriculum as well as the future employability of students graduating at the end of the academic year. This chapter reflects in and on the action of the curriculum transformation response implemented in studio-based modules at a local Higher Education Institution in South Africa. The global health crisis started the conversation of a pedagogical shift in studio-based modules, but it forced South African design educators to take a hard look at the way design has been taught in South Africa.

Titled ‘Reframing Teaching African Music and Dance in the Tertiary Education Context: Alternatives and Pedagogical Solutions for Online and Other Forms of Non-contact Teaching in the Face of the COVID-19 Pandemic’, Patricia Opondo, Eric Sunu Doe and José Alberto Daniel Chemane focused their chapter on the practical study in African Music and Dance (AMD) that has been offered at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) for over two decades, since 1996. Always in contact mode with the genre specialist providing either individual or group instruction, learning is by rote where students carefully observe examples presented by the practical lecturer, as well as carefully outlined techniques to be used in mastering the instrument or dance style under study. In the light of the COVID-19 global pandemic, this teaching model had to be immediately reviewed and alternative ways of working remotely with students devised. This educational practice is against the backdrop of indigenous music transmission that is characterised by in-person engagement between a specialist and the tutor/learner. A method that UKZN AMD program uses that works well, is adopting indigenous practices of enculturation from the traditional non-formal contexts for learning African

Music and Dance to the institutional setting in the tertiary education setting – but by still maintaining the wisdom, creativity, interpretation that flourish as a result of this non-formal method of teaching. In addition to the already removed enculturative setting, the new juncture, catalysed by COVID, requires that practical modules are offered via non-contact instruction. The chapter examines the work in two different scenarios of the UKZN African Music and Dance (AMD) program. The first, individual instrumental instruction, in this case, the palm wine guitar from Ghana, explores a re-imagination of its instructional mode within the context of a remote teaching and online assessment. The second example in the context of ensemble work involves groupwork with different members playing percussion, singing and dancing. In this case, the genre/style provided is *ngalanga* dance-drumming from Mozambique.

The next chapter is titled, **‘Preparedness of Staff and Students in Utilising Learning Management Systems in Health Sciences as Crisis Intervention during Lockdown’** and written collaboratively by **Vasanthrie Naidoo, Shanaz Ghuman, Nellie Naranjee, Lavanya Madamshetty, Jamila Khatoon Adam, Maureen Nokuthula Sibiya, and Suresh Babu Naidu, Krishna**. With the recent emergence of COVID-19 and the associated lack of adequate information on the epidemiology, therapeutic management or natural history of COVID-19, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) around the globe have experienced profound structural changes in teaching and learning. It is important for academics and researchers at Higher Education Institutions to plan and apply appropriate self-directed learning and teaching principles to ensure effective teaching and learning outcomes. This demands a strong sense of responsibility and accountability not only from a student perspective but, more importantly, from the perspective of the learning institution. South African Higher Education institutions have been equally affected, creating a strong sense of responsibility and accountability not only from a student perspective but, more importantly, from the perspective of the learning institution. The dynamics of learning and teaching environment, together with rapid changes in science and technology, have important implications for Higher Education and lecturers and students essential to be prepared to cope with the increasing complexity of Learning Management Systems (LMS). Learning institutions are now at the forefront of developing the skills of enquiry, which encourages self-directedness and life-long learning through robust LMS, such as computer applications for the management, certification,

tracing, broadcasting, and conveyance of informative online courses, tutorial plans, or education and personality development programs. In this chapter, the authors deliberate the preparedness, problematisations and prospects for new insights and responses to infectious diseases, especially COVID-19, that confront the health sciences curriculum within undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

‘Blending Digital and Technological Skills with Traditional Commerce Education Knowledge in Preparation for the 4IR Classroom: The COVID-19 Catalyst’ is authored by Orhe Arek-Bawa and Sarasvathie Reddy. In an era characterised by unprecedented technological developments in all spheres of life, the current 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) requires a workforce that can blend digital and technological skills with traditional subject matter expertise. These individuals are also expected to possess other human skills, including problem solving, creativity and critical thinking. Higher education institutions are tasked with the responsibility of producing such graduates for the workforce. Considering the current wave of global lockdown in almost all spheres of life arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, e-Learning is a viable option for education. The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) School of Education embraces this idea and provides an enabling environment to support virtual learning. However, the extent to which the teacher-education programme is developing student teachers via e-Learning platforms who can thrive in the 4IR digitized school classroom is not apparently clear. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has created a catalyst for academics to test this development. Using the Commerce Education discipline in the School of Education at UKZN as a case study, this chapter draws on the Technological, Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) model to determine the extent to which academics have blended digital and technological skills with traditional Commerce Education knowledge. Document analysis was performed on the revised module templates for the Accounting Education 113 and Economic Management Science (EMS) 111 modules that were prepared for emergency remote learning during the lockdown period. The findings make a case for further empirical research to focus on the lived pedagogical experiences of both academics and students who undertook such modules via the e-Learning platform. It is envisaged that this chapter will make timeous theoretical contributions in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic that has catalysed the need to prepare Commerce Education academics and students for the current 4IR classrooms

during and after the pandemic from a technological, pedagogical and traditional knowledge perspective.

Phumlani Erasmus Myende and Nokukhanya Ndlovu authored ‘**COVID-19 and Emergency Online Teaching and Learning: A Challenge of Social Justice for University Rural Students**’. As a response to COVID-19, many universities have decided to use emergency online teaching and learning (EOTL) to salvage teaching and learning time and ensure that 2020 academic activities do not collapse completely. Drawing from social justice theory, this chapter provides a critical analysis of how EOTL, as a response to COVID-19 complexities, will not succeed in the South African rural context, hence exacerbating injustices for students from poor rural communities. They argue that students from poor rural communities encounter deep social and economic challenges that will collude to render EOTL in the context of COVID-19 unresponsive to the realities that the majority of students from poor rural communities encounter. To show how EOTL may only favour the already privileged students, they first critically look into the context of rurality in terms of students’ access to resources that are critical for learning through EOTL. Secondly, they expose the nature of the familial setup and learning space in South African rural families in order to demonstrate how the setup and space of EOTL are not conducive to learning. While responding to the current event of COVID-19, the chapter contributes to an understanding of how issues that characterise students from poor rural communities may result in the intended innovations aimed at addressing COVID-19 complexities may in fact challenge the principles of transformation that many universities have made part of their visions since the demise of apartheid.

The normal teaching, learning and assessment for students who are differently abled is through contact teaching where they receive support from specialists, peers, carers and the Disability Unit. Specialized equipment and physical support for students who are differently abled are located in the university facilities and are usually only available in the university environment. The COVID 19 pandemic disrupted face-to-face contact teaching and, in an effort to contain the spread of the virus and save the academic year, universities were required to shift to remote online teaching and learning. In ‘**Reflections on Differently Abled Students’ Challenges with Online Learning amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic and Lockdown**’ **Samukelisiwe Khumalo, Asheena Singh-Pillay, and Roshanthni Subrayen** respond to the gap identified in the literature and focus on challenges students who are

differently abled face with online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic era. The chapter focuses on one research question: What challenges students who are differently abled faced with online learning during the COVID 19 pandemic era? We embraced an ecological perspective on learning to (re)think how learning spaces arise through the interdependent interactions of students who are differently abled, with teaching and learning materials, digital tools, lecturers, parents and the community in a multiplicity of contexts that are bounded within an ecosystem. The study was framed by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory. Zoom was used as a platform for data generation. Data were generated through photo elicitation reflections from three participants from one campus at a South African University. Data were analysed initially by NVIVO to obtain codes; thereafter similar codes were grouped into themes. Our findings illuminate the bi- and multidirectional influences of (f)actors within and across the university, students' home and community contexts that impinge differently abled students encounter with online learning. Our findings highlight the need to forge collaborations across various spaces that students who are differently abled find themselves in. At a theoretical level our findings call for the need to reconceptualize learning spaces.

In Social Work education, field instruction is a component where students learn the practice of social work through delivering social-work services to clients in non-profit organizations, government departments and community settings. Through the field instruction placements, students learn how to integrate theory into practice, to critically examine the knowledge, values, and principles of what they have learned theoretically in a lecture room. Therefore, proper preparation of social-work students to enter practice is critical and it requires supervision by an experienced field instruction social worker of all processes and intervention undertaken by students during their field instruction practice. The role of field instruction in Social work education is recognized as an integral part of students learning and development. In **'Social Work Field Instruction Supervision and Resilience during COVID-19 Lockdown'**, Thobeka S. Nkomo seeks to explore and describe how the COVID-19 has affected student social workers' training and what could be considered for the future of social-work field instruction training. As the researcher endeavoured to respond to these questions, she based her discussions on her capacity as a former field instruction coordinator, and on observations and experiences in engaging with students and their supervisors. She also highlights some of the strategies that emerged during the lockdown

period to enhance the supervision interaction, whilst ensuring quality field instruction supervision standards.

Research is key to inform evidence-based practices and responses. The need for research to address the impact of COVID-19 and inform sustainable interventions has emerged as a critical component of the response to this global threat. There is also growing recognition that the current context provides both opportunities and challenges for research efforts at universities, including postgraduate education. In the final chapter, **‘Supporting Research at South African Universities during the COVID-19 Crisis: Key Areas for Consideration and Critical Reflections on Responses with a Focus on Postgraduate Education’**, Urmilla Bob, Suveshnee Munien, Amanda Gumede and Rivoni Gounden draw on a desktop study of university responses to the COVID-19 crisis to establish how institutions are providing administrative and systems-orientated support to ensure the continuation of research, the varied research responses to the COVID-19 threat itself, and key best practices approaches that are emerging that are likely to change the modes and modalities of research training. Additionally, qualitative research is employed to reflect critically on the authors’ experiences (as a component of self-ethnography) from the varied perspectives of research management and leadership, supervision and being postgraduate students. Key aspects that are examined in this chapter include process and procedural changes, the capacity and ability to provide administrative support, ethical issues and protocols, financial and resource considerations (including access to funds, and library materials, amongst others), training support (including accessibility to supervisors and internet-based online training materials), and disciplinary-specific sensitivities (that is, different approaches and challenges in relation to lab-based, field-based and desktop based research).

References

- Arthur, P. 2008. Exhibiting History. The Digital Future. *reCollections: Journal of the National Museum of Australia* 3,1.
- Arthur, P.L. 2015. Digital Textuality, Writing and New Media. *Anglistik: International Journal of English Studies* 113 – 123.
- Benmayor, R. 2012. Digital Testimonio as a Signature Pedagogy for Latin@ Studies. *Equity and Excellence in Education* 45,3: 507 – 524.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2012.698180>

- Burdick, A. J. Drucker, P. Lunenfeld, T. Presner, J. Schnapp 2012. *Digital Humanities*. Cambridge & London: MIT Press.
- Foucault, M. [1963] 1973. *The Birth of the Clinic*. Sheridan, A.M. (trans.). New York: Pantheon Books. Available at: [https://monoskop.org/File:Foucault Michel The Birth of the Clinic 1976.pdf](https://monoskop.org/File:Foucault_Michel_The_Birth_of_the_Clinic_1976.pdf)
- Foucault, M. [1970] 1982. *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London: Tavistock. Available at: <https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/jaro2013/SOC911/um/>
- Foucault, M. [1975] 1979. *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*. Sheridan, A. (trans.). London: Penguin. Available at: <https://zulfahmed.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/disciplineandpunish.pdf> (Accessed on 17 December 2020 .)
- Freire, P. [1968; 1970] 2007. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Maart, R. 2020. Decoloniality and Decolonial Education: South Africa and the World. *Alternation* Special Edition 33. Forthcoming.
- Mkhize, N. & W.W. Nobles 2020. Afrikan-Centred Psychology: Illuminating the Human Spirit - Spirit(ness), *Skh Djr, Moya*. *Alternation* 27,1. Available at: <http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/Files/articles/volume-27/20-Alternation-27-1-Full-Text.pdf>
- Mkhize, N., N. Ndimande-Hlongwa, L. Ramathan & J.A. Smit (eds.) 2020. Editorial. In, *Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in the Time of COVID-19*. Durban: CSSALL Publishers. (*Alternation African Scholarship Book Series, Volume # 03.*) Editorial URL: Available at: <http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/Files/books/series-03/00iv-editorial.pdf> Full Volume: <https://doi.org/10.29086/978-0-9869936-4-0/2020/AASBS03>
- Moran, S. 2014. Education for Freedom. *Alternation* 21,2: 248 - 286. Available at: <http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/Files/docs/21.2/12%20Mor.pdf>
- NEMISA. Available at: <https://nationalgovernment.co.za/units/view/129/national-electronic-media-institute-of-south-africa-nemisa> (Accessed on 27 April 2020.)
- NEMISA. Available at: <http://www.nemisa.co.za/about-us/profile-our-history/> (Accessed on 27 April 2020.)
- Ndimande-Hlongwa, N., L. Ramathan, N. Mkhize & J.A. Smit (eds.) 2020. Editorial. In, *Technology-based Teaching and Learning in Higher Education during the Time of COVID-19*. Durban: CSSALL Publishers. (*Alternation African Scholarship Book Series, Volume # 02.*) Editorial

URL: Available at: <http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/Files/books/series-02/00-Editorial.pdf> Full Volume: <https://doi.org/10.29086/978-0-9869936-1-9/2020/AASBS02>

- Noble, V. & K. Hiralal 2020. The Black Death and COVID-19: The Value of Studying Pandemics in Historical Perspective. In Smit, J.A., N. Mkhize, N. Ndimande-Hlongwa & L. Ramrathan (eds.): *Learner and Subject at the Dawn of Digital Humanities Research-Led Teaching and Learning in the Time of COVID-19*. Durban: CSSALL Publishers. (Alternation African Scholarship Book Series, Volume # 04.)
- Ramrathan, L., N. Ndimande-Hlongwa, N. Mkhize & J.A. Smit (eds.) 2020. Editorial. In, *Re-thinking the Humanities Curriculum in the Time of COVID-19*. Durban: CSSALL Publishers. (Alternation African Scholarship Book Series, Volume # 01. Editorial URL: 6: Available at: <http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/Files/books/series-01/01/00-Editorial.pdf> Full Volume: <https://doi.org/10.29086/978-0-9869936-1-9/2020/AASBS01>
- Smit, J.A. & D. Chetty 2014. Reimaging the Humanities in the Twenty-First Century: Towards an Interdisciplinary and Collaborative ‘Digital Humanities’ in Africa. *Alternation* 21,2: 176 – 206. Available at: <http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/Files/docs/21.2/09%20Smi.pdf>
- Smit, J.A. 2017. #DecolonialEnlightenment and Education. *Alternation* 24,2: 253 – 311. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.29086/2519-5476/2017/v24n2a13>
- Smit, J.A. & D. Chetty 2018a. 23/ 25 Years of *Alternation*, and the African Digital Humanities. *Alternation* 25,1 (2018): 8 - 30. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.29086/2519-5476/2018/v25n1a2>
- Smit, J.A. & D. Chetty 2018b. The African Digital Humanities and *Alternation* on the UKZN OJS Platform (2018–): Innovation, Pan-African Collaboration, and Trans-Continental Integration. *Alternation* 25,1 (2018): 360 – 393. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.29086/2519-5476/2018/v25n1a15>
- Smit, J.A. & D. Chetty 2018c. Designing Heterotopic Transversal Equitable Foundations for Open Knowledge: Access, Freedom, & e/Quality. *Alternation* Special Edition 23: 8 – 33. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.29086/2519-5476/2018/sp23a2>
- Smit, J.A., N. Mkhize, N. Ndimande-Hlongwa & L. Ramrathan (eds.) 2020. *Learner and Subject at the Dawn of Digital Humanities Research-Led*

Johannes A. Smit et al.

Teaching and Learning in the Time of COVID-19. Durban: CSSALL Publishers. (*Alternation African Scholarship Book Series, Volume # 04.*)

Professor Johannes A. Smit
Chair and Director: Humanities Institute
School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Durban, Edgewood & Pietermaritzburg
smitj@ukzn.ac.za

Professor Nhlanhla Mkhize
DVC and Head of the College of Humanities
School of Applied Human Sciences
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Durban, Edgewood & Pietermaritzburg
Mkhize@ukzn.ac.za

Professor Nobuhle Ndimande-Hlongwa
Dean of and Head of School
School of Arts
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Howard College & Pietermaritzburg
Durban
Hlongwanl@ukzn.ac.za

Professor Labby Ramrathan
School of Education, and
President of SAERA 2019-2021
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Durban
ramrathanp@ukzn.ac.za