



## Re-Envisioning Scholarship of Teaching and Learning with Data Analytics and a Borderless Curriculum in a Troubled World

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In an era marked by increasing geopolitical strife and societal challenges, the imperative role of education in bridging divides and fostering understanding is unparalleled. This special issue aims to delve into the transformative potential of integrating data analytics within the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), and in crafting a curriculum that transcends borders. Such an endeavour is crucial in effectively navigating and positively contributing to our complex, troubled world. Throughout this issue, we shift our lens to the transformative role of data analytics in reshaping SoTL. The collection of papers in this special issue presents a rich discourse on how data-driven insights can revolutionise curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and student engagement. These insights pave the way for more effective, personalised learning experiences, adeptly responding to the unique needs of learners in a digitally interconnected world.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, we delve into the significant role of big data in comprehensively understanding educational trends and outcomes on a global scale. This exploration is not just about harnessing data for improvement but also about reimagining education in a way that transcends traditional boundaries, fostering a truly global and inclusive learning environment. This issue, therefore, serves as a crucial platform for dialogues and insights that redefine the landscape of education, ensuring it remains responsive, dynamic, and inclusive in an ever-evolving global context.<sup>2</sup>

The special issue also comes against the background that the world continues to enter an unprecedented time characterized by violence, hate, killings, and unending conflict among many other human trajectories. Solutions implemented by various stakeholders such as governments, non-governmental organisations, and non-profit organisations seem to be failing to produce a better world for all. There is a sharp increase in social pathology and less regard for the value attached to humanity. Social fibre that has held communities over centuries seems to be slowly diminishing with the rise of extreme nationalism, xenophobia, and hate for the minority and those in the peripheral as categorised by the powerful, the haves, and owners of the means of production. As such, no one is safe, igniting a need to rethink our practices as humanity. Coupled with the foregoing the world has entered a phase where the use of technology has become the order of the day. Through technology, new ways of making life have emerged such as the use of artificial intelligence which in some quarters has disturbed the way of life. However, on the other hand, technology has accounted for increased killings, suicide and isolation of people from African social fibre. Given that technology has emerged in the era of various social pathology, it is critical that educators and authors engage with the use of technology to find the best alternatives for human emancipation. It requires educationists to rethink the very teaching profession to meet the demand for the use of technology while cognisant of the need to tap into best practices from a

<sup>1</sup> Luca Valera, “Posthumanism: Beyond Humanism?,” *Cuadernos de Bioética : Revista Oficial de La Asociación Española de Bioética y Ética Médica* 25, no. 85 (2014): 481–91.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas L Friedman and Michael Mandelbaum, *That Used to Be Us: How America Fell behind in the World It Invented and How We Can Come Back* (Macmillan, 2012); Patriann Smith and Patriann Smith, “Accomplishing the Goals of Multicultural Education,” *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue* 15, no. 1 (2013): 27–40.

borderless curriculum approach to create a better society for all.<sup>3</sup> We believe that various curricula presented from different contexts have the impetus to use technology towards human emancipation and eradication of social pathologies that have rendered the world an unsafe place for human habitation. In light of the foregoing, we as guest editors of this special issue through a partnership with the Centre for Teaching and Learning at Sol Plaatje University, undertook to contribute to narratives of making this world a better place through the use of technology with an emphasis of data analytic from a borderless curriculum perspective.

Our argument is that as part of the contribution to the solution, we see scholarship of teaching and learning as having the impetus to reconfigure the world by teasing a curriculum that values humanity and adopts best practices in different contexts or countries to mitigate social pathologies. A borderless curriculum sees scholarship of teaching and learning as a gateway to solving human problems by sharing best practices are mitigating the crisis. Thus, in this special issue, various papers were submitted, and peer-reviewed and some were recommended for publication since they contributed to knowledge in the use of technology in teaching and learning while at the same time suggesting various solutions from borderless curriculum to address various social pathologies.

To produce a rounded special issue that contributes to knowledge, we required authors to juxtapose with the following questions.

1. What are the best practices for leveraging technology and digital platforms to facilitate data-driven teaching and learning?
2. How can institutions support academic staff in developing the necessary skills and competencies for effectively using data analytics in their teaching practices?
3. How can data analytics contribute to addressing complex global challenges, such as climate change, social inequality, and political conflict, through teaching and learning?
4. What are the challenges associated with assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of data-driven teaching practices, and how can these challenges be addressed?
5. What curriculum practices and innovation can make the world a better place for all?
6. How can hate and prejudice be reduced among people through the scholarship of teaching and learning?
7. How can scholarship of teaching and learning mitigate gender-based violence, xenophobia and structural exclusion?
8. What is the contribution of scholarship of teaching and learning to peace dialogues in the 21st century?
9. How can scholarship of teaching through a borderless curriculum ignite acceptance of minorities, the excluded, and persons facing epistemic injustice?
10. What would a relevant scholarship of teaching and learning look like in an attempt to contribute positively to humanity?

## CONCLUSION

We believe that this special issue is the right direction towards embracing various technologies and data analytic approaches to solve various trajectories and social pathologies that threaten human existence. We are convinced that this could be possible through a borderless curriculum approach where based practices are embraced, appreciated and adopted to improve the human condition regardless of curriculum borders put in place to thwart educational sharing.

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<sup>3</sup> Bekithemba Dube and Elizabeth Campbell, "Borderless Curriculum in the Post-Human Era: Reflections on the United States of America and South African Initial Teacher Pedagogical Practices," *Journal of Curriculum Studies Research* 5, no. 1 (March 14, 2023): 34–43, <https://doi.org/10.46303/jcsr.2023.4>.

## **ABOUT GUEST EDITORS**

**Prof. Bekithemba Dube** holds a PhD in curriculum studies and is currently an Associate Professor and Acting Head of the Educational Foundation Department, Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State. He has published more than 100 journal articles, and book chapters and edited a volume of curriculum, religion and politics in the global south in the past 3 and half years. He has guest edited the following journals, *Alternation*, *Journal of Cultures and Values*, *Journal of Curriculum Studies Research*, and *Journal of Cultures and Values in Education*. He serves on the editorial board of various journals as well. He has received various excellence awards such as Master's University Book Prize, Best Academic Student, Great Zimbabwe University, 2014, and Best Emerging Researcher in the Faculty of Education University of the Free State, 2018. The Extra Miler Exceeding Expectations Award: In recognition and appreciation of an exceptional contribution to the Unit for Language Development, 2018. Exceptional Contribution as a consultant at the Write Site Award, 2018. USDP Scholar Supervisor Award, 2019 with Colorado State University. He was awarded the Outstanding Service award, community and Excellence in the field of community engagement in the category of engaged research by the Vice-Rector, University of the Free State, 2019. Most Prolific Researcher in the Faculty of Education 2019 and 2020. Recognition for Research Excellence award UFS, 2020 for being the third highest productive scholar in the entire university. He was also awarded the Khothatsa Award for being the most inspirational lecturer, in 2021 and the best departmental award in 2021. He was awarded a supervision grant for UK-SA for a period of 3 years with the University of Highland and Islands (UK). His research focuses on African studies, decoloniality, religion and rural education in post-colonial Africa.

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