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## **Background: Curriculum Studies in South Africa**

Curriculum as one of the central components of the education system, both of school education and higher education, has often been integrated into the general discourse of Education in South Africa, while globally, the advancement of Curriculum as a field of inquiry has grown exponentially. The discourses on Curriculum in South Africa has largely been related to the context of educational transformation, responsive and progressive education and policy terrain, yet globally the Curriculum Inquiry has transcended the instrumentality of curriculum. The opportunity to go beyond this instrumentality of curriculum in South Africa will open up spaces to imagine possibilities for our context. Hence, the Curriculum Studies Special Interest Group (SIG) of the South African Education Research Association (SAERA) is a home to advance curriculum thinking. The intention, therefore, is to advance Curriculum Inquiry in South Africa, taking on an African philosophical approach, to advance the philosophy, theory and praxis associated with the field of Curriculum Inquiry.

Pursuant to this intention, the Curriculum Studies SIG of SAERA (<https://www.saera.co.za/sigs/curriculum/>), endeavours to harness scholarship in Curriculum Studies, to recognise and promote advancement in inquiry, thinking and theorising in the discipline through research, collaborative engagements, seminars, conferences and publications, and to build a formidable group of Curriculum scholars within South Africa.

## **Symposia at SAERA**

Each year the Curriculum Studies SIG facilitates a two hour symposium at SAERA's annual conference. Topics that have been address are:

- Scoping the curriculum scholarship in South Africa over the last 25 years (2019)
- Stuck in the rhetoric of decolonisation: Curriculum Studies in South Africa through the lens of Pinar's complicated conversations (2019)
- Curriculum capture of educational reforms: Accountability to whom and for whom in re-situating the complicated conversations in South Africa (2019)
- Celebrating 50 years of Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed (2018)
- Decolonising Curriculum in formal education – what, why, how and for whom? (2017)
- Intellectual integrity, rigour and critical illumination: re-imagining Curriculum Studies scholarship (2016)
- Curriculum in/and/for policy: venturing beyond instrumentality (2015)

## **Webinars/regional workshops**

The intention of the regional workshops and webinars is to organise opportunities for scholars to meet outside of the annual SAERA conference to engage with scholarly discussions and debates on issues related to Curriculum Studies. The focus of these regional workshops and webinars are to explore the range of discourses and debates that are informing the work of Curriculum Studies scholars within South Africa. The outcome of these regional workshops and webinars are to establish a project on scoping the field of Curriculum Studies within South Africa to illuminate the interest in and future directions of Curriculum Studies within South Africa. This baseline scoping will then create

opportunities to harness interests in and direct future engagement to build a formidable Curriculum Studies scholarship within South Africa. The following topics have been addressed in these regional workshops and webinars:

- *Ubuntu-currere*: Rethinking curriculum in South Africa's decolonial moment (Lesley le Grange, Mlamuli Hlatshwayo & Lester Shawa, 2020)
- Neoliberalist curriculum in the context of crisis (Suriamurthee Maistry & Zayd Waghid, 2020)
- Work-integrated learning for student teachers: A research-led approach during Covid-19 and beyond (Maureen Robinson, Lee Rusznyak & Carol Bertram, 2020)
- (Re)configuring curriculum theorising: Some posthumanist musings (Petro du Preez & Shan Simmonds, 2020)
- Curriculum Studies and its commitment to activist intellectualism: The case of the decolonial project in South Africa (Suriamurthee Maistry, 2019)
- Decolonisation in Universities: The Politics of Curriculum (Jonathan Jansen, 2018)
- Learning to Teach in Post-apartheid South Africa - Student Teacher' Encounters with Initial Teacher Encounters (Yusuf Sayed, 2018)

### Special Issues of the Curriculum Studies SIG: Publications

In 2018 the SIG sent a call for papers for a **special edition in the Journal of Education**. It was edited by Labby Ramrathan, Petro du Preez and Lesley le Grange. The theme was **"Internationalising, indigenising, decolonising and Africanising Curriculum Studies"**. In this special edition the editors invited papers that advance the discipline of Curriculum Studies, taking cognisance of the current discourses and debates relating to binaries, contestations, illuminations and possibilities. Internationalisation, indigenisation, decolonisation and Africanisation are shaping debates informing the global and local Education landscape. Contributions complexified, demystified and disrupted discourses such as internationalisation, indigenisation, decolonisation, Africanisation and other related concepts as it relates to Curriculum Studies. Philosophical and empirical works employing a variety of methodological traditions were considered in the focal areas of higher education, technical and vocational education and training, teacher education and schooling. To download the issue for free, visit the following site:

<https://journals.ukzn.ac.za/index.php/joe/issue/view/48>

In 2020 the SIG again sent out a call for papers for a **special issue in *Alternation*** (Editors: Petro du Preez, Labby Ramrathan & Shan Simmonds). The theme was **"On Curriculum Philosophy, Thinking, and Theorising in South African Higher Education Transformation"**. The special issue's intent was to engage critically with various dimensions of curriculum transformation. This important, appropriate, and timely scholarly undertaking with its philosophical and theoretical musings, was framed by the questions: Why is curriculum philosophy, thinking, and theorising in South African higher education transformation pivotal right now? How has curriculum transformation unfolded in diverse higher education institutions? These questions are central to curriculum specialists and their continued commitment to advance the field in South Africa. Articles providing philosophical engagement with higher education curriculum transformation opened this special issue and these were followed by articles that contribute to the thinking and theorising thereof. To download the issue for free, visit the following site:

<http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/pages/volume-27-2020/alternation-special-edition-31.aspx> &

The core members of the SAERA Curriculum Studies SIG also contributed to a book published by ***Alternation*** in 2020. It was titled: **"RE-thinking the Humanities Curriculum in the Time of COVID-19"**. COVID-19 has become a threat to the health and wellbeing of the world population. Its global pandemic nature has the potential to destabilise systems and processes that have defined human existence, epistemology and knowledge up to now. New ways of thinking, new responses to systems and processes and new boundaries are being formed as a result of this rapidly spreading disease. In responding to the disruption to higher education, the volume sought to address the key question of: how have institutions responded to the institutional closures and the protection of integrity of what is being taught, learnt and assessed across programmes in the Humanities? In response to this key question, a compilation of ten chapters formed the volume addressing initial insights, problematisations, opportunities and actions taken by institutions on the Humanities curriculum within the context of COVID-19. To download the issue for free, visit the following site:

<http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/Files/books/series-01/01/12-AASBS-01-Full-Volume.pdf>

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