

**Editorial**

**A tribute to Brenda Leibowitz - a Slow scholar and editor**



This issue is dedicated to one of our founding editors, Brenda Leibowitz, who passed away on 26 April 2018. Brenda was an active Associate Editor, involved with *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning* from its inception. She was also responsible for the book reviews – three of which appear in this issue. These reviews benefited from Brenda’s typical practices of attention to detail, nurturance, and guidance for the authors of these reviews.

Besides being longstanding close friends for more than 30 years, Brenda and I shared many common interests intellectually, and were involved in many academic projects together, which included co-writing and co-editing a number of texts. The final piece that we wrote was published a few weeks prior to her passing away and focused on Slow scholarship of teaching and learning in the South (Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2018). This text has particular resonance with regard to Brenda, for she epitomises what I would call a Slow scholar and editor. *Slow* in this case has nothing to do with speed or duration, as Carlo Petrini (2007), the originator of the Slow food movement<sup>1</sup> made explicit. but has to do with certain qualities which I believe Brenda inhabited or which inhabited her. These qualities include attentiveness, carefulness, deliberation, thoughtfulness, a receptive attitude, creativity, intensity, discernment, and the ability to cultivate pleasure. As an editor and an academic,

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<sup>1</sup> The Slow food movement was initiated by Petrini, a leftist journalist who protested against McDonald’s being built on the Piazza di Spagna in Rome in the late 1980s. Since then, Slow movements have proliferated across the world, including in academia with Slow science (Stengers, 2018), Slow philosophy (Boulous Walker, 2016), Slow pedagogy (Berg & Seeber, 2016), Slow methodology (Tishman, 2018), and Slow scholarship (Bozalek, 2017; Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2018).

Brenda paid close attention to detail, always doing justice to the ideas expressed in texts, rather than imposing her own preconceptions on what was being expressed. These are also considered to be important qualities of Slow scholarship. She was highly responsive, or response-able<sup>2</sup>, as well as responsible and reliable, so that one would never have to worry about assigning tasks to her as one could assume that she would accomplish them with promptness and a depth of engagement, always with careful attentiveness to generate a quality job. As we noted in our article, the emphasis of Slow scholarship ‘is quality rather than quantity, depth of engagement and a willingness to engage across differences of discipline and ideas’ (Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2018: 3). Brenda was interested in collaboration and traversed many academic areas, locations, and institutions, gathering interesting ideas from her numerous connections across contexts and knowledge areas.

Other significant characteristics of Slow scholarship which pertain to Brenda and to which we allude in our article are the ethico-political and the aesthetic aspects. Brenda was deeply involved with both the political and ethical aspects of scholarship and higher education, viewing them as inseparable from each other. She was concerned with what mattered and was meaningful, and had a highly developed awareness of social inequities both in the South African context and more broadly, particularly in the global South. Brenda was interested in how knowledge was acquired and produced and what counts as knowledge, and was in the process of writing a manuscript on pedagogic justice in higher education when she passed away. She had recently launched a new online journal *SoTL in the South* where she had the role of editor-in-chief.

As a Slow scholar and editor, Brenda has made a substantial contribution to education in general and in the last three decades to higher education at an institutional, regional, national and international level, especially with regard to issues of social justice. She has been a well-loved person in the various institutions and organisations in which she worked and has touched many lives, generously nurturing and supporting people so that they could flourish as teachers and scholars in academia. She has also been a highly regarded and thoughtful scholar who managed to produce many publications and share her work both nationally and internationally. We will sorely miss her as an irreplaceable member of our editorial team, but her legacy will live on through the material traces of her Slow qualities in and beyond this journal.

The articles in this edition all pertain to Brenda in one way or another – she is entangled in various ways with the authors or the subject matter. Siseko H. Kumalo’s article focuses on the injustices perpetrated by historically the white university (HWU) in its creation of the ‘Native of Nowhere’ through negations and erasures. Siseko proposes a pedagogy of mutual (in)fallibility to subvert these injustices. The ideas in Siseko’s article speak directly to Brenda’s interest in epistemic injustices (Leibowitz, 2017), socially just pedagogies (Leibowitz, 2016; Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2015; Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2016), and higher education and the public good, particularly from southern perspectives (Leibowitz, 2012). Moira Bladergroen, Anton Basson and Deborah Blaine’s article on the positive impact of blended teaching and learning on engineering faculty students relates to Brenda’s interest in the different ways in which participatory parity can be produced for students who are

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<sup>2</sup> Having the ability to respond

differently positioned with regard to epistemological access to engineering knowledge. Elmarie Costandius and colleagues write about their experimenting with posthumanist and new materialist perspectives in arts-based practice and research in a South African classroom. Brenda and Elmarie have been part of a National Research Foundation project examining the contribution of posthumanist and new materialist perspectives for socially just pedagogies in higher education. Prior to this, they were involved in projects on professional identities of lecturers and Elmarie was a teaching fellow at Stellenbosch University when Brenda was the Director of Teaching and Learning there, and subsequently became a national Teaching fellow in the Teaching Advancement at Universities (TAU) project initiated by Brenda. Finally, Sherran Clarence's paper looks at how to engage with peer tutor development in inclusive and participatory ways, a topic close to Brenda's heart, as many of the projects she was involved with were seeking to promote participatory parity – i.e. the ability to interact as peers in higher education (Fraser, 2008, 2009). Sherran and Brenda both previously worked at the University of Western Cape Writing Centre – Brenda was instrumental in starting the Writing Centre in 1994 (Leibowitz et al., 1997).

*Vivienne Bozalek*

Editor-in-chief, on behalf of the Editors

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