

## *Editorial*

This June 2025 issue of *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning (CriSTaL)* brings together five papers that grapple with the complexities of academic writing centres, access and success of students, and the struggles to decolonise the university. These papers offer a fresh and nuanced perspective into understanding the challenges that continue to plague the higher education sector. The first two papers deal with academic writing centres and language questions in higher education, and the remaining three articles grapple with the call for reimagining higher education transformation and decolonisation, and the neoliberal pressures.

Jean Moore and Laura Dison open the issue with their paper titled, 'Diffracting our stories: New questions about roles in and beyond South African university writing centres'. In this paper, Moore and Dison explore the role that university writing centres play in transforming higher education. Through the use of ongoing critical reflexivity underpinned by resilient pedagogical practices and bystander theory, they reveal how writing centres tend to portray the roles of victims, perpetrators, and bystanders in higher education. This, they suggest, has implications not only for the effectiveness and impact of university writing centres, but also for the possibilities of transforming higher education in general.

Working in a similar theme, Akulina Chihobo and Leketi Makalela title their paper, 'Unlocking academic success through translanguaging: Summary writing at a South African university'. Chihobo and Makalela investigate the impact of translanguaging on summary writing of multilingual students in a South African university. Through qualitative research, they reveal that translanguaging enhances comprehension and engagement with texts as it allows students to use multiple languages freely. They suggest that there is a need for targeted language policies to promote what one could term linguistic equality, so as to ensure that all languages are supported and intellectually recognised (and pedagogised) in South African universities.

In a paper titled 'Branching Life Orientation into a formal knowledge interspace in a post-postmodern higher education landscape', Sarina de Jager and Janet Jarvis adopt a humanist approach to re-imagine higher education beyond the neoliberal marketplace. Critiquing what they term as the 'ills of neoliberalism', De Jager and Jarvis adopt a postmodernist perspective to make a case for reclaiming the academic integrity of Life Orientation. Through the metaphor of the baobab tree, they propose a transdisciplinary approach to reclaiming Life Orientation as a critical discipline.

The final two papers talk to each other in their focus on decolonial methodology and challenges faced by student movement leaders. In 'Exploring *ukuthunywa* as African methodology: Decolonial research and ethical considerations', Nombulelo Tholithemba Shange draws on African methodologies and indigenous knowledge systems in an effort at subverting coloniality. Focusing on *ukuthunywa* by African mountain doctors, she explores the African traditional ways of creating, storing, maintaining, and reproducing knowledges. For Shange,



exploring and investigating *ukuthunywa* is inherently a decolonial and humanising exercise, as it allows us to understand this often overlooked, under-explored and under-researched African indigenous knowledge and cultural practice.

In the final paper, titled 'The effects of decolonial praxis on leaders of transformative movements: The case of Masivule in South Africa', Cliff Sekowe, Michael Okyere Asante, Jessica van den Brink and Alexander Andrason reveal the crippling and structural challenges experienced by student leaders in South African universities. The authors, the founders of #Masivule i-Antieke Studies movement, theorise their own experiences and narratives in tackling colonial and untransformed institutional structures and practices at university. Focusing on four aspects - structural, epistemic, personal, and relational – they propose decoloniality as a counterhegemonic and emancipatory tool that can help student leaders respond to institutional violence and oppression in their lives.

Overall, all the five papers contained in the June 2025 issue of *CRiSTaL* offer us a new perspective in understanding the intersectional challenges of language, translanguaging, academic writing, African indigenous methodologies, and student leaders' resistance and dissent at university. All the papers have made a sustained contribution in helping us to reimagine higher education differently.

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