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About the Journal

The *Teacher Education through Flexible Learning in Africa* (TETFLE) and other developing contexts online journal is a refereed, open-access e-journal that publishes original research on distance teacher education in Africa. TETFLE aims to create a platform for researchers and practitioners on glocal matters that relate to distance teacher education on the continent. Publications cover issues of content, pedagogical consideration, technology and management in distance education. Exemplar papers with rigour showing research evidence are most appreciated.

TETFLE also publishes review articles and book reviews. The journal currently appears once in a year, with an additional special edition from accepted biennial conference papers, as applicable. The journal is the official journal of the Distance Education and Teachers' Training in Africa (DETA) biennial conference, hosted by the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria, South Africa.

Focus and scope

The *Teacher Education Through Flexible Learning in Africa* journal is an independent, open-access publication, and serves as a medium for articles of interest to researchers and practitioners in distance teacher education. The journal provides a unique platform



for researchers from faculties of education to share knowledge on educational issues that especially affect Africa. It gives particular issue preference to research presented at the DETA Conference, which takes place biennially.

The views expressed in the journal are those of the respective authors.

Teacher Education Through Flexible Learning in Africa invites submissions sent electronically to: <https://upjournals.up.ac.za/index.php/tetfle/about/submissions> conforming to the author guidelines.

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Editorial

A paradigm shift towards innovative, resilient and transformative teacher education

Dr Tony Lelliott, South African Institute for Distance Education, Saide
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In the *Teacher Education through Flexible Learning in Africa* Volume 5, teacher-educator researchers tried to imagine teacher education through distance education for a post-pandemic future. The key concepts in the theme for the current issue of the journal are innovation, resilience, and transformation. Over the past decade, much has been written about innovation in teacher education. Evgeny Morozov (2014) regarded innovation as a “buzzword” embraced by all political persuasions. Within the context of teacher education, Ellis and colleagues (Ellis et al., 2019) attempted to move the concept of innovation away from the new technologies and marketisation, and make a place for it within social justice and equity. Within the African context, the latter have not yet been fully adopted, at least within the articles for this issue of *Teacher Education through Flexible Learning in Africa* and *Other Developing Contexts* (TETFLE). Nevertheless, teacher education must embrace innovation for the transformation of practices, promotion of lifelong learning, and achievement of education for sustainable development.

Resilience in teacher education would seem to be a vital concept to promote, given the last five years of turbulence in the sector. In addition to the pandemic, African countries undergo various events that disrupt schooling, such as significant weather events, Internet shutdowns, insecurity, distribution, and transport of resources. Some countries have also introduced changes in school curricula that demand new teacher competencies. Teacher education therefore needs to provide solutions to enable teachers to surmount these obstacles and cope with the changes, amidst the normal day-to-day stresses of teaching. Elena Agular (2021) suggests that three actions distinguish thriving teachers from those who merely survive, namely, reflection, boundary-setting, and clear decision-making.

The third aspect of this issue’s theme is transformation. For UNESCO World

Teachers' Day in 2022, the theme was "The transformation of education begins with teachers", and included the need for 15 million properly qualified teachers to achieve SDG 4 by 2030; the improvement of teachers' working conditions and opportunities, including sufficient funding; and the need for teachers to actively participate in social dialogue, and decision-making processes and policies. Therefore, a question is what countries and teacher education institutions in Africa are doing to ensure that transformation in this sector is achieved.

Within the last 18 months, a new opportunity and threat has begun to emerge for teacher education, which future researchers will likely see as a true paradigm shift: artificial intelligence (AI). There were several discussions at DETA 2023 (Kampala, Uganda) mainly on the threats posed by AI, principally concerning the fact that students can use tools such as Chat-GPT to answer their assignments. However, we should note that the same concerns were voiced when the Internet itself was developed, and the most far-sighted educationists realised that it was more of an opportunity than a threat (Education Week, 1998). As long as teacher educators view AI as a tool for them to use, it can undoubtedly be used innovatively and transformatively.

The first article in this issue, contributed by Orucho Michael Ngala (2024), examines strategies used by OdeL centres to enhance the acceptance of new technologies by online learners. Using the Technology Acceptance Model to analyse the findings, Ngala found that the strategy most commonly used by users in the centres was to continuously evaluate to identify gaps for improvement, followed by developing a comprehensive plan for integrating new technologies into the teaching and learning processes. The study identifies ten strategies for enhancing the ODeL mode of Learning in Kenya, the most important being policy and institutional support, infrastructure development, the promotion of awareness and communication, and training and capacity building. In summary, the study recommends that OdeL centres select user-friendly platforms and tools, and conduct regular evaluations of the usability and effectiveness of these tools to identify areas for improvement.

Pambas Tandika Basil, Placidius Ndibalema, Godlove Lawrent, Joyce Mbepera and Prosper Gabrieli (2024) researched how an in-service training programme on phonics-based literacy impacted teachers in Tanzanian Public Schools. They found that teachers received better support for their teaching practices than for materials development or for improving their content knowledge. Overall, teachers were relatively unsatisfied with the training they received, as it was conducted over a short



period, and the study concluded that the training should have been continued over a more extended time period.

Waaiza Udhin and Vicky Avinash Oojorah (2024) conducted an in-depth study on how innovation is conceptualised in education in Mauritius, using online questionnaires and focus group discussions. The article reveals diverse and often conflicting views influenced by sectoral experiences. For example, while primary educators focus on technological tools like tablets and projectors, secondary educators express disillusionment due to limited visible innovation. Higher education respondents are split, with some emphasising digital tools and others cautioning against equating innovation solely with technology. Systemic barriers such as rigid curricula, lack of funding, minimal industry involvement, and conservative mindsets hinder meaningful change. The study stresses the need for a shared understanding of innovation, more decisive leadership, and policies promoting tangible and intangible innovations. The paper highlights the absence of African-centric models, warning that reliance on Global North benchmarks may obscure local innovations.

Joyce West (2024) used a mixed-method design to examine South African lecturers' and students' experiences in interactive video assessment. The article reveals that both students and lecturers found the videos engaging and beneficial for promoting cognitive and teacher presence in online and hybrid learning environments. The study, guided by the Community of Inquiry and Technology Acceptance Model frameworks, highlights that interactive videos support active, inquiry-based learning; continuous assessment; and self-reflection. While lecturers appreciated their pedagogical flexibility and ease of use, successful adoption was contingent on comprehensive training and thoughtful instructional planning. Despite their many benefits, the study notes that interactive videos do not effectively foster social presence (CoI framework) and must be complemented by other strategies.

Eric Addae-Kyeremeh, Jane Cullen, Might Kojo Abreh, Margaret Ebubedike, and Joyceline Alla-Mensah (2024) explores how course tutors in a Ghanaian distance learning institution enact pedagogical practices, particularly focusing on learner-centred approaches rooted in transformative pedagogy. Drawing on Freirean concepts of dialogue and facilitation, the study finds that most tutors favour interactive, discussion-based teaching; which is sometimes challenged by course content (e.g., Mathematics); student unpreparedness; and logistical constraints. Tutors must often adapt their methods to accommodate mature learners with varied backgrounds

and limited study time. The study recommends ongoing professional development, improved monitoring, and investment in technology to support inclusive, flexible, and engaging distance education.

Natasha Madhav (2024) discusses the importance of optimising Open Educational Resources (OER) and practices to enable inclusive education, particularly in African universities. Madhav highlights the challenges faced by Higher Education Institutions in developing countries, such as the digital divide, budget constraints, and power cuts, and emphasises the potential of OER and Information and Communication Technology to provide effective and inclusive access to educational resources. The study explores an open pedagogical approach that promotes inclusivity, access, and collaboration between students and educators, aiming to enhance teaching and learning activities and support curriculum transformation

The editors hope that this set of articles will inspire researchers and practitioners in distance learning for teacher education across Africa to adopt innovative and transformative approaches to their work. In conclusion, the editors of this special issue of *Teacher Education through Flexible Learning in Africa* (TETFLE) would like to thank the following colleagues who assisted with the review process and contributed to the community of practice in this way:

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