Editorial

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The 2006 Kenton Conference was held in the rustic coastal town of Wilderness in the Southern Cape with the theme 'Education beyond boundaries'. The theme was apposite, with the Kenton Education Association and the Education Association of South Africa combining forces to have a joint conference, kindly hosted by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Both organizations have a lot to offer the South African educational community and their diverse approaches and traditions made for an interesting mix. The combination, however, points to the absence of a national research association above and beyond the more particular histories and interests of Kenton, EASA, and other educational research communities such as SACHES. We do need to push beyond old institutional, historical, cultural and intellectual traditions and look to establishing a broader organization on a national level.

'Education beyond boundaries' is a theme so broad as to catch everything. To move beyond a boundary one has to know what is being moved beyond. Everything has a boundary and by implication something beyond it. Each article did specifically move beyond a boundary. Fataar takes us into the township and the particular logics it has in relation to principalship; Hugo, Bertram, Green and Naidoo work from within a Bernsteinian boundary outwards to other languages of description that assist in the study of pedagogy; Holderness, Bold, Henry and Wood break the age barrier and show how school children can become action researchers; Rule and John discuss negative and positive ways communities dealing with HIV/AIDS work the space of the 'other' beyond 'healthy normality'; Blignaut takes us beyond the broad policy/practice dichotomy into the personal lives of teachers and the unique contexts of the schools they operate within; finally Maistry moves beyond the boundary line of an educational community of practice based on Wenger's model by showing how it already assumes the expertise it is supposed to develop.

In the lead article, Fataar, employing an innovative combination of 'spatial' and 'performance' lenses, focuses on the reflexive adaptations of principals in a township in Cape Town. His key argument is that these principals' professional and pedagogical identities must be understood in light of the

relational transactions they make relative to the spatial dynamics of the
township. It is their engagement with the sociality of this township – the
flows, intersections, and its material surfaces of inscription – that provide the
conditioning context for their work as principals. Drawing on feminist-
inspired theories on 'gender as performance' and based on ethnographic work,
Fataar argues that the township can be regarded as a stage for their enactment
of a performative script, on the basis of which they go about establishing their
subjectivities as principals.

In our second contribution, Hugo, Bertram, Green and Naidoo discuss some of
the instrumental difficulties that arose when researching the reproduction of
inequality in South African classrooms. Using the distinction made famous by
Marshall McLuhan between the medium and the message they argue that
while a Bernsteinian research tradition provides a highly illuminating set of
analytic tools to research the 'medium' of pedagogy, it does not provide us
with the analytic tools needed to research the quality of the 'message'. In order
to find appropriate analytic tools to research the message transmitted in the
pedagogic situation they turned to the work of Bloom. The example of a
research study done in Grade 10 History classrooms in two KZN schools –
one an ex HoA, and the other an ex DET school – is used to discuss how the
research group struggled with the research instruments and slowly became
aware of how to use different instruments for different tasks. The paper offers
a working arrangement between two major research traditions not usually held
together and shows how, when each research instrument is used for what it is
designed for, a finer and more complete analysis can be achieved.

Holderness, Bold, Henry and Wood explain how young people aged 10–17
can undertake action research into their own practices in collaboration with
their teachers who are doing the same. The authors adopt Winter's (2003)
metaphor of a patchwork approach, in which the individual case studies of
young people in four different locations are 'stitched' together to form a multi-
layered narrative of co-operative learning. The key significance of the paper
lies in its capacity to theorise the contributions of all participants as involved
in a dynamic process of co-creating new knowledge.

In the fourth article, Peter Rule and Vaughn John carefully describe two forms
of working with 'others' in relation to HIV/AIDS within the Richmond area.
The first is a negative form of othering that ridicules, ostracizes and
stigmatizes those infected and associated with HIV/AIDS. This is contrasted
to a positive and more inclusive form that transforms an 'othering' process

into a more accepting framework. The question is how we move communities from a negative 'other' to a neutral or positive 'another'. Rule and John point to how traditional forms of pedagogy within these communities (content and teacher heavy) do not engage with the issues of death and desire in a telling way. What is needed is a far more complex understanding of the pedagogic implications of working with HIV/AIDS, one that works with a pedagogy of trust and connectedness, one that draws on the learners and educators as resources, one that creates networks of support and connection with other resources. Underlying this description is the recognition that the Pedagogy of the Oppressed worked out by Paulo Freire over 40 years ago still has a substantial contribution to make in South African education, especially within a developing context.

Sylvan Blignaut tackles the question of how teachers make sense of, and enact, curriculum policy. He hones in on teacher epistemologies using a cognitive sense making framework that allows for a careful description of how teachers respond to policy construction at a school and classroom level. The focus is on how teachers' own personal habits intersect with the institutional culture of the school and then how both speak back to and recontextualize policy imperatives. It looks at curriculum policy reform from inside the place it is supposed to ultimately reach – the practices of teachers within schools – and shows that the collective weight of personal and institutional scripts bends the policy reform project into a personalized orbit and makes it circle individual and school imperatives. Teachers and the schools they are located within conserve their own historical practices and twist the sometimes radical reforms demanded by the post apartheid state into minor variations on existing custom.

In the sixth article, Murthi Maistry sets out to analyse the dynamics of teacher learning of novice Economic and Management Sciences teachers involved in the Teaching Economic and Management Sciences (TEMS) teacher development project. Stuck without much help from the Department of Education and needing to start teaching the new EMS syllabus within Primary schools, these teachers engaged in a 'community of practice' where they worked together with Maistry to improve their understanding and teaching of EMS. Using Wenger, Maistry shows how it is possible to develop indicators to evaluate whether a community has emerged or not. This is useful as human interactive systems are by their very nature malleable and subtle, so providing clear criteria to guide the analysis is a strength of the paper. More interesting, however, is the critique of Wenger that emerges from the attempted

implementation of a community of practice in a South African educational landscape scarred by overwhelming inequalities. At its simplest the issue is what the teachers from the most disadvantaged schools bring to the professional community. Expecting them to enter a participatory structure where knowledge and ideas about teaching and learning EMS are shared and worked on is to operate blindly with a set of expectations that refuse to recognize the impact of active discrimination on teaching expertise and professionalism. It is to embrace a rhetoric of equal, participatory democratic, community practice where what is actually demanded on the ground is a direct intervention that addresses the failure of the educational system in South Africa to induct most of its teachers into a rigorous, specialized, professional set of pedagogic practices. It is not that Wenger's models do not have value in a South African context, it is that they tend to rely on an already existing expertise that mostly only middle class teachers and learners bring to the table. As such the risk is run of reproducing inequalities through a community of practice model rather than interrupting them. Maistry suggests that combining communities of practice with the recognition of the need for explicit expert intervention is a viable model in South African conditions and it is hard to disagree with him.

If all of the above move in someway beyond existing educational boundaries, none of them theorize what the educational boundary qua boundary is. There is a suggestion in the conference theme that education beyond boundaries is somehow a good thing, with the corollary that education within boundaries must be a staid, conservative affair. To put it politely, this is romanticist rot, addressed most simply by focussing precisely on what the nature of an educational boundary is in the first place, but that would be for another conference to fight over.