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## Editorial

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This special edition of the *Journal of Education* draws on a contemporary concern with memory and pedagogy in South Africa – as we see, for example, in a themed issue of *Perspectives in Education* that examines how different “post-conflict societies”, including South Africa, engage with “the past as a pedagogical problem” (Jansen and Weldon, 2009, pp.107–108). At the same time, this edition builds on recent international work done in an invitational workshop on *Productive Memory & Social Action* held in 2008 (see <http://iirc.mcgill.ca/workshop/>) and in an edited book titled *Memory and Pedagogy* (Mitchell, Strong-Wilson, Pithouse and Allnut, 2011b), to consider how working with memory – as phenomenon and method – might contribute to pedagogical practice and research in the South African context.

Memory-work has its roots in a process of collaborative inquiry on female sexualisation undertaken by a group of feminist women in Germany (see Haug, 1987) and then further developed and elaborated by researchers such as Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault, and Benton (1992), Onyx and Small (2001), and Lapadat, Black, Clark, Gremm, Karanja, Mieke and Quinlan (2010). Memory-work is underpinned by the premise that memories play a fundamental role in current individual and collective patterns of thought and action and that we can consciously work with memory to become aware of and intervene creatively in these patterns (Pithouse, 2007). In particular, memory-work is aimed at revealing and gaining insight into the social meanings of and influences on memory. As Crawford *et al.* (1992, p.49), explain:

What is of interest is not why person X’ s father did such and such but why fathers do such things. The aim is to uncover the social meanings embodied by the [memories] and to uncover the processes whereby the meanings – both then and now – are arrived at.

Hence, the fundamental purpose of memory-work is to facilitate a heightened consciousness of how social forces and practices, such as gender, race and class, affect human experiences and understandings and of how individuals

and groups can take action in response to these social forces and practices in ways that can make a qualitative difference to the present and the future.

Memory-work has been taken up in relation to pedagogy by Mitchell and Weber (1998,1999), who conducted pioneering research on the role of memory-work in teacher development in the 1990s. They worked with Canadian schoolteachers to examine how their memories of childhood and schooling had influenced their own teaching and how they might engage critically and creatively with these memories as “[tools] for change” (Mitchell, Strong-Wilson, Pithouse and Allnutt, 2011a, p.2). Subsequently, Samaras, Hicks, and Berger (2004) drew on a range of largely North American studies to explore how schoolteachers’ and teacher educators’ memory-work – conceptualised as ‘personal history self-study’ – could facilitate personal and professional development. And, in Australia, Austin and Hickey’s (2007) use of autoethnographic memory-work with student teachers and practising teachers highlighted its potential “for the development of critically reflexive and genuinely emancipatory professional practice, particularly, in Education” (p.377).

Memory-work is also emerging as a significant pedagogic and research method in the South African Education field. Shortly after the first democratic elections in South Africa, Mitchell (2004) conducted a series of workshops with beginning teachers, in which drawings produced by school children in response to the prompt ‘let every child learn’ invoked the teachers’ memories of schooling. And Samuel (2003) conducted participatory autobiographical research with pre-service English teachers to explore the how their memories of the learning and teaching of English might influence their future development as English teachers. Then, Pithouse’s doctoral study (2007, 2011) demonstrated how memory-work with practising teachers in Honours and Masters courses facilitated their intellectual and emotional engagement with the learning process. Moving beyond the domain of teacher education, De Beer (2009), a lecturer in the arts and design field, explored how her own autoethnographic memory-work had transformed her pedagogic practice with students.

What this growing body of scholarship in *educational* memory-work points to are significant interconnections between memory-work and educators’ reflexive study of their own pedagogic selves and practices. Mitchell and Weber have conceptualised this as “a pedagogy of reinvention” – “a process of going back over something in different ways and with new perspectives, of

studying one's own experience with insight and awareness of the present for purposed of acting on the future" (1999, p.8). This work also speaks to the idea of what they term "beyond nostalgia", and they call for ways to work with memory that go beyond what bell hooks refers to as "useless longing" (cited in Mitchell and Weber, 1999, p.5), turning practices of working with memory into what might be described as "future oriented remembering" (Mitchell and Reid-Walsh, 2002, p.54).

In this themed issue, we see a range of ways that scholars are currently taking up a 'pedagogy of reinvention' in diverse South African contexts. In so doing, they respond to what Hampl writes about memory in relation to the self:

There may be no more pressing intellectual need in our culture than for people to become sophisticated about the function of memory. The political implications of the loss of memory are obvious. The authority of memory is a personal confirmation of self-hood. (Hampl, 1996, p.211)

The articles in the issue call attention to both the educational significance and challenges of working with memory and self in relation to pedagogy in South Africa. They also illustrate a variety of innovative and creative approaches to educational memory-work.

Pattman's article describes and examines an experience of involving postgraduate Sociology students in a process of collective memory-work through choosing, writing and telling a story in class relating to their youth or childhoods. Hemson's article problematises a process of young student leaders 'speaking' their early memories of violence in a group context. Hobden, a Mathematics teacher educator, explores the pedagogic value of asking future teachers to remember their experiences with Mathematics. Maistry, working in the field of Business Studies teacher education, focuses not only on the pedagogic significance of triggering his students' memories, but also on the pedagogic value of bringing his own memories into play. This move towards the remembered self of the author/researcher/educator takes us to Singh's article, where she uses the method of a self-interview to explore the evolution of her own identity and practice as a Drama Education lecturer. Tobias, a schoolteacher, also employs memory-work to inquire into his past learning experiences, with the aim of deepening his understanding of his current teaching and of potential for future change. Finally, Masinga offers an account of the methodological possibilities and challenges of using memory-

work in a participatory study of teachers as sexuality educators – in which she is both researcher and participant.

The articles in this issue offer a sense of ‘future oriented remembering’ in relation to how memory can be used productively in diverse educational contexts in South Africa, and, as such, these articles contribute to raising new questions about memory-work and self-reflexive study of pedagogic practice. How, for example, might ‘a pedagogy of reinvention’ be integrated across disciplines in Higher Education institutions in South Africa? Transformative Education/al Studies (TES) – an NRF-funded inter-institutional, trans-disciplinary project involving researchers from the Durban University of Technology, Walter Sisulu University and the University of KwaZulu-Natal – is currently addressing some of the complexities of carrying out this work (see Pithouse-Morgan, Rawlinson, Pillay, Chisanga and Timm, 2012). Taken as a whole, what the articles in this special issue draw attention to is the pedagogic significance of bringing forward the past, as painful as it might be. This is aptly expressed by a South African teacher, reflecting on his experience of memory-work (in Pithouse, 2007, p.118):

There is a saying that a nation without history is a lost nation. So, as much as there may be certain things that we might not want to remember, those things could be important to remedy the situation we are in at the present moment and to lead us to the future.

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