

## **New academics' past assessment experiences as a voice in a university's socially just assessment**

Key words: Socially just assessment; experiences; injustices

One of the legacies left by the South African apartheid government in 1994 is socially unjust education. Since then, the democratic government has been on a mission to address the injustices. However, the #FeesMustFall protests revealed persistent education social injustices that were further amplified by the COVID 19 pandemic. According to Waghid (2016), one of the significant ways to cultivate social education justice is through improving pedagogical activities. This is the focus of this study.

This exploratory qualitative case study was prompted by an exercise given by an academic developer to eighty-one newly appointed academics in two assessment sessions of a virtual induction programme at the case university. Vygotsky's social constructivist approach was adopted to facilitate the sessions by involving the new academics in the session. The aim was to co-construct socially just assessment (pedagogical) knowledge to create a culture of socially just assessment in the case institution.

The session explored the new academics' assessment experiences within a Higher Education (HE) context through metaphors. Bryan and Clegg (2019) advised that the assessment design is influenced, to an extent by the designers' experiences. The purpose of this study is to elicit lessons from the academics' experiences to design and implement socially just assessment practices. The main research question is: What are the new academics' past assessment experiences that they can draw lessons from to design and implement socially just assessments?

The objectives of the study are:

- To explore the new academics past assessment experiences
- To draw lessons from the new academics' experiences that could assist in developing socially just assessments
- To develop a socially just assessment culture within the institution

The results of the study are not yet reported because the data analysis is still in progress. The inductive and thematic analysis with the social constructive lens is used to analyse the data (Creswell 2008). One of the metaphors reported by one group to represent the academics' experiences was an iceberg phenomenon. They reported that whilst the student success is observed above the waterline there is a lot that people do not see under the waterline that the students go through.

The HELTASA (un)conference participants will be engaged to explore the iceberg phenomenon presented by one group. It is believed that engaging the participants will give us more data to enrich our socially just assessment practices and that the participants will learn from the engagement. The paper can provide insights on how both researchers investigating the inclusion of academics voices and those embarking on developing a socially just assessment culture within a HE context.

The two key questions for engaging the participants that the proposal raises are:

- What are the persistent issues of social injustices in the assessment that are beneath the waterline of an iceberg that the students go through?
- How can the issues be addressed to ensure a socially just assessment culture?