

Foreword

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We are humbled to write a foreword to this comparative collection of contributions published under the title *Teacher Education in South Africa and Germany. Shared perspectives on national and global questions*.

We write this foreword with a global pandemic still sweeping across the world, leaving no country untouched. With all the tragedy associated with the pandemic, the economic havoc it has wreaked, and the differences in each country's management of the pandemic and vaccine rollout, there have also been many similarities across the world, especially in relation to how we have cared for each other and come to each other's aid, suggesting that while we have much that separates us, our common humanity brings us together.

This book and the compelling contributions from colleagues on two continents show beautifully how networks and alliances can be expanded based on shared strengths and similar values. They also show how contemporary thematic areas of study—which are vital for the future of education and teacher education, not just in Germany and South Africa, but also globally—can be studied, analyzed and written about with coherence and thoughtfulness.

The post-pandemic environment offers opportunities for emerging alliances and strategic research partnerships at all levels. COVID-19 has levelled the playing field to a certain extent, fundamentally reshaping time and space. A teacher educator in Tübingen can now co-teach a class with a teacher educator from Johannesburg in a way that

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was previously impossible. This collapsing of boundaries is less about technological efficiencies and much more about the knowledge project and an agile higher education system.

Universities across the globe face common challenges, but some more than others. As the world reframes itself, they need to seize these opportunities and position themselves as generators of global knowledge. *Teacher Education in South Africa and Germany* shows how this moment has been utilized to produce a book that takes a comparative stance on teacher education in South Africa and Germany, challenging the hegemonic power of knowledge production in teacher education globally. Importantly, in its comparative stance, the book reminds its readers that knowledge and its production are not independent of their context and contextual relevance. The knowledge interests of the contributors clearly show their responsiveness to the local, whilst framing their thinking and actions on a global level.

While this book is about teacher education, there are powerful lessons for schooling and teaching, as the chapters show the potential for advancing teacher expertise—a vital element for classroom learning—whilst also addressing the equally vital socio-economic contexts of schools and classrooms in South Africa and Germany.

Collectively, the work from each of the chapters fosters a critical dialogue about teacher education, teaching and sustainability in South Africa and Germany. The book also shows just how much resonance there is: of challenges, of concerns, of aspirations to improve teacher education and to foster a nurturing environment. Through the collaboration of our two universities, we enrich this environment even more.

This anthology is important for everyone, but particularly for those who find themselves seeking new and inspiring alternatives for teacher education in a post-pandemic world.