

EDITORIAL

Editorial: Expanding the journal of teaching and learning in africa

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Together, the Africa Federation of Teaching Regulatory Authorities (AFTRA) and UNESCO's International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) are launching an expanded and improved version of the *Journal of Teaching and Learning in Africa* with support through IICBA from the European Union under its Regional Teacher Initiative for Africa, whose aim is to support African countries to raise the quality of teacher education and training and contribute to increasing the availability of teachers with minimum required qualifications. The relaunch of the journal was announced at the 11th AFTRA Conference and 13th AFTRA Roundtable hosted in May 2024 in Lusaka by the Ministry of Education and the Teaching Council of Zambia. The conference was attended by over 400 participants in person, including Ministers of Education from Ghana, Lesotho, Namibia, Nigeria, Morocco, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. At least 1,000 people participated online. H.E. Mutale Nalumango, Vice President of Zambia, opened the conference on behalf of H.E. Hakainde Hichilema, President of Zambia.

AFTRA is an intergovernmental organization comprising the Ministries of Education and national agencies regulating teaching in African Union Member States. Inaugurated in October 2010 in Abuja, Nigeria, by the Ministers of Education of Nigeria and South Africa, AFTRA has grown into a continental federation that leads policy development and implementation for the professionalization of teaching in Africa. A half dozen issues of the *Journal of Teaching and Learning in Africa* have been published over the years as proceedings of the annual AFTRA conference with a selection of papers presented at the conference. This meant that only one issue was published each year (except during the COVID-19 pandemic as the conference was not held in 2020 and 2021).

The revamped journal will welcome high quality papers year-round with at least two issues published per year, and hopefully more. This may include special issues put together by guest editors. The journal will be jointly managed, edited, and promoted by AFTRA and UNESCO IICBA. Papers will be peer-reviewed and published in open access at no cost to authors. Journal issues and individual articles published from 2024 onwards will be available on both IICBA's and AFTRA's websites. Authors may submit papers online via the journal section on the AFTRA website, ideally also emailing the Programme Manager at the AFTRA's Abuja Headquarters through info@africateaching-authorities.org. Selected papers presented at the AFTRA annual conference may still be published in the journal provided they are of high quality.

New aims and scope

The Journal of Teaching and Learning in Africa will publish research into matters affecting teachers in Africa and globally with the aim to inform evidence-based teacher policies, including approaches to empower countries to accelerate the level of development of their teaching profession. The journal will also publish research on factors affecting student learning at all levels, from pre-schools to higher education. This will include a focus on the role of teachers and school leaders in improving student performance, but also articles considering other factors affecting learning. Beyond foundational learning, due consideration will be paid to issues related to education for peace and sustainable development, as well as to the many benefits from education in the labor market and beyond. Empirical as well as conceptual or theoretical papers on teaching and learning in Africa and globally will be welcome. The journal will welcome high quality articles that will be of interest not only to researchers, but also to policy makers, teachers, and school leaders, as well as more broadly education stakeholders.

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Guidance for authors

Most papers to be published in the journal will be full length original research articles typically at 5,000 to 8,000 words. Articles from authors from all backgrounds and viewpoints are welcome, but researchers from the Global South including Africa are especially encouraged to submit their work. In selecting papers, as co-editors, we will consider both the quality of the paper and its accessibility to a wide readership. Highly technical papers will not be appropriate for the journal, but in-depth analysis will be welcome, whether using qualitative or quantitative (including statistical and econometric) methods. Discussing the implications for education policies of empirical findings or theoretical analyses will be encouraged, but without overstating the relevance of any particular analysis for policy or practice. Country-focused papers as well as cross-country analyses, conceptual or theoretical approaches, and literature reviews will all be featured in the journal, as will case studies.

The papers in this first issue of the new journal focus on school leadership. They are illustrative of the types of papers the journal will aim to publish. Good school leadership is essential to support teachers and improve learning outcomes for students in Africa. This issue follows up on a workshop on investing in school leaders in Africa organized by AFTRA, the African Union, and UNESCO IICBA at the last AFTRA annual conference in Lusaka in May 2024. The workshop considered among others the following questions: (1) How much does school leadership matter for teachers and learners?; (2) What can we learn from surveys of school leaders?; and (3) How can we strengthen policies for school leadership including Africa-wide certification? These and other questions are considered in the articles included in this issue of the journal. School leadership is also the theme of the next 2024/25 Global Education Monitoring Report to be published by UNESCO.

We hope that you will enjoy the new journal. Please do not hesitate to contact us, for AFTRA at info@africateaching-authorities.org, and for UNESCO IICBA at info.iicnba@unesco.org.