

EDITORIAL

SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE 5TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION, JULY 2025

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Guest Editor

It is our delight to publish a Special Issue for Lonaka Journal of Learning and Teaching, which is a product of the 5th International Conference on Academic and Professional Communication held from 16-18 July 2025, and organised by the Communication and Study Skills Unit, University of Botswana.

Communication is central to all processes. The heart of this Issue heralds the nature of academic and professional communication through the lens of language policy in education, academic communication in textbooks, e-governance and digital communication in higher education. This demonstrates that academic and professional communications serve to address real-life challenges within and beyond the boundaries of education to improve and advance our society. Indeed, the articles provide insights into the multifaceted communication challenges with solutions and recommendations.

The first paper by Nwaefuna and Kalane on gender representation provides an extensive multimodal discourse analysis on how English textbooks are used to portray gender roles in the traditional Botswana context. It further indicates the continuous stereotypes, as illustrated through passive and domestic duties and the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles in the textbook images. The paper thus illustrates that textbooks are not only tools for communicating knowledge but also instruments for shaping social perceptions and norms.

The second paper by Mogumba highlights the dominance of English language in Zimbabwe's education system. This dominance is heavily criticised as a barrier to equity and social justice because many students are disadvantaged. The tradition of relegating other 16 indigenous languages to the background in schools generates an engaging and interrelated discourse on identity, language policy and access in education. The paper proposes an inclusive language in education policy through multilingualism.

The third paper, by Sithole, Rajah and Runzika on Zimbabwe, highlights the importance of e-government, based on citizens' access to information. The multi aid support organisation in Zimbabwe is presented as a hypothetical illustration of experiences in other Sub-Saharan Africa countries. As such, information and communication

technologies (ICTs) are leveraged in public service delivery. The authors call for more intentional studies on e-government for effective policies in Zimbabwe and other countries.

The fourth and final paper, by Gijimah and Dube, sheds light on digital communication in a higher educational institution in Zimbabwe. The paper examines the use of Google Classroom, WhatsApp and email for academic communication. The authors discuss underlying factors and common challenges in digital communication in the academic context.

Finally, communication is not just an afterthought—it is at the core of the academic journey. I encourage you to read and also contribute to our journal of scholars, practitioners and policy makers in the field of education- Lonaka Journal of Teaching and Learning, towards a better future in academia.