

# EDITORIAL

## Where have all the writers gone?

Although compiling and editing *TET* is interesting and challenging, there is always one thing that bugs and frustrates me. And that is the reluctance of teachers and lecturers to write for a publication such as this.

In this issue we have only one article submitted by a teacher – we thank Lindsay Ross this. Last year some of the presenters at the Maritzburg for teachers of English kindly made their presentations available for publication on our website. But we need more teachers to come to the party (as we say in South African English).

And where are the academics who work in English departments? Where are those involved in training English teachers? Surely they must have some ideas about language or literary topics or teaching the subject that they could share with serving teachers?

Things have changed since my earlier days in the profession when teachers and academics made regular valuable contributions to *Crux*, a journal on the teaching of English published by the Foundation for Education, Science and Technology. (I have included some articles from that publication in this issue of *TET*.)

Where have all the writers gone? Surely not to graves everyone?

Teachers will say that they don't have the time. No one would dispute (certainly not myself – I've been there) that teachers are very busy people, that they are overwhelmed by curriculum changes, admin loads, extra-murals, bigger classes, assessing ad nauseam, and so on. But surely teachers are not so busy that they can't send in just one paragraph – e.g. a teaching tip; something they like / dislike about the curriculum; a humorous incident which happened in class? Or share their research or exam questions on a prescribed work? Surely there are some teachers who have done extra studies or reading from which they have gleaned some ideas that they could share with others?

Or is the younger generation too used to social media, where all they do is share inconsequential information in two or three lines?

Or is it that our teachers don't believe they can write? Surely most English teachers have reasonable writing ability, or how do they teach this? In fact, by writing themselves they will find that they are better able to teach the skill.

And what about our lecturers and academics? One sees them contributing to peer-reviewed publications, but not to others. Does this mean that the 'publish-or-perish' syndrome has captured them to the extent that they don't see the value of publishing in 'lesser' journals? Does this mean that they are only interested in pursuing their academic careers by earning points and kudos for themselves and their institutions?

So my challenge to English teachers and academics is: Consider the needs of the thousands of learners in our schools by responding to the call for contributions to *TET*.

Prince Philip once said: 'Giving to this institution is like giving lipstick to your girlfriend – you're sure to get something back.' By writing and sharing teachers will find that they will, in the process, grow and renew themselves.

**Malcolm Venter**

**EDITOR**