

## Editorial

### Journal of Educational Enquiry Vol 14 No 3

I am pleased to present the third edition of the journal for 2015, a bumper year for the publication.

Volume 14 Numbers 1 and 2 were special editions, focussing respectively on the Arts and Drama in Education, and Education for Social Justice.

This edition features five articles on general educational topics, but there are some common threads connecting them which are pertinent to the themes of the journal; including teachers' work, curriculum development, working with pre-service teachers, and reflecting on practice. It is particularly pleasing to feature papers from international contributors, with countries represented including Finland, China and the United States as well as Australia.

The first article is based on a large scale study of Year 2 and 3 students undertaking the NAPLAN<sup>1</sup> Reading Assessment in Australia. Maria Nicholas investigates the current impact of high stakes testing in Australian schools against the analytical framework of Aristotle's three categories of knowledge: theoretical, technical and practical. Translating curriculum policy into practice is acknowledged as problematic in basing assessment only on standardised assessment outcomes, when teacher judgement that can be inclusive of all three categories of knowledge is not given equal status.

Three different knowledge areas also become the focus of the next article by Sini Kontkanen and her co-authors from Finland - this time in the context of pre-service teacher education - represented as TPACK (Technological, Pedagogical and Content Knowledge), a framework that offers a means of investigating knowledge related to ICT for teaching and learning. In this case, the authors report on a very interesting study undertaken with Finnish pre-service teachers, investigating the efficacy of discussing sensitive issues around sex education using Second Life as a virtual technological learning environment.

The following paper from the United States continues the theme of Pedagogical Content Knowledge, this time in the context of science education and using student knowledge as a resource to help guide learning. Mason Kuhn investigates learning through inquiry by sharing experiences of classroom activities that promote logical and critical thinking, and presents a very useful framework that teachers can adopt in the process of developing a more facilitative, inquiry-based approach to their classroom practice.

Mathematics becomes the learning area focus of the next article, co-authored by academics from the United States and China, in the context of reforming traditional teacher-centred methodologies. Based on a study of 30 mathematics teachers from six middle schools in Northern China, the article provides interesting case study analysis of various innovative classroom practices that challenged such traditions, mainly through an 'infiltrative' approach to reform that the authors Meng and Wang suggest confirms teaching change as a gradual and incremental process that is culturally scripted.

The final article in this edition returns to the themes of teacher education and pedagogical practice, from the perspective of an Australian teacher educator who has undertaken a self-study of her own practice. Victoria Whittington believes that listening to student voice is not only vital for Early Years educators, but also for those like herself who are educating these educators. Based on the Vygotskian notions of dialogic practice and socio-cultural constructivist standpoints, the article

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<sup>1</sup> NAPLAN: National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy

describes and analyses the process of undertaking a reflective approach to teaching practice through writing, reviewing literature, dialoguing with colleagues and systematically drawing on student feedback, to reinforce the importance of student voice in higher education.

We conclude this edition with a review of a book published last year through Immortal Books: *Teaching with spirit – New perspectives on Steiner Education in Australia*, edited by Tom Stehlik and Leigh Burrows and reviewed by Helen Platell, the inaugural principal of the Mt Barker Waldorf School for Rudolf Steiner Education.

I commend this edition to the reader and thank my co-editor Dr Michele deCourcy, the journal manager Louise Carslake, and those colleagues who have been ready and willing to review articles and provide constructive feedback to our contributors.

Dr Tom Stehlik

Co-Editor

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