Teachers and Curriculum

THE UNIVERSITY OF
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Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

About the Journal

Teachers and Curriculum is an online peer-reviewed publication supported by Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research (WMIER), Faculty of Education, The University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. It is directed towards a professional audience and focuses on contemporary issues and research relating to curriculum pedagogy and assessment.

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Notes for Contributors

Teachers and Curriculum welcomes

- innovative practice papers with a maximum of 3,500 words, plus an abstract or professional summary of 150 words, and up to five keywords;
- research informed papers with a maximum of 3,500 words, plus an abstract or professional summary of 150 words, and up to five keywords;
- thinkpieces with a maximum of 1500 words; and
- book or resource reviews with a maximum of 1000 words.

Focus

Teachers and Curriculum provides an avenue for the publication of papers that

- raise important issues to do with the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment;
- reports on research in the areas of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment;
- provides examples of innovative curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practice; and
- review books and other resources that have a curriculum, pedagogy and assessment focus.

Submitting articles for publication

Please consult with colleagues prior to submission so that papers are well presented. Articles can be submitted online at http://tandc.ac.nz/

Layout and number of copies

All submissions must be submitted online as word documents. Text should be one and a half spaced on one side of A4 paper with 20mm margins on all edges. Font = Times New Roman, 11 point for all text and all headings must be clearly defined. Only the first page of the article should bear the title, the name(s) of the author(s) and the address to which reviews should be sent. In order to enable 'blind' refereeing, please do not include author(s) names on running heads. All illustrations, figures, and tables are placed within the text at the appropriate points, rather than at the end.

Foot/End Notes

These should be **avoided where possible**; the journal preference is for footnotes rather than endnotes.

Referencing

References must be useful, targeted and appropriate. The Editorial preference is APA style; see *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (Sixth Edition). Please check all citations in the article are included in your references list, if in reference list they are cited in document, and formatted in the correct APA style. All doi numbers **must** be added to all references where required. Refer: http://www.crossref.org/

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Acknowledgement of Reviewers

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DIGITAL SMARTS: A BOOK REVIEW

Wright, N., & Forbes, D. (Eds.). (2015). *Digital smarts: Enhancing learning and teaching*. Retrieved from http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wmier/publications/books/digital-smarts-enhancing-learning-and-teaching

I was looking forward to reading this book, being well aware of many of the authors toiling away creating their chapters here at the University of Waikato. When it was released, I was pleasantly surprised by a factor I had initially missed—*Digital Smarts* is freely available as a digitally downloadable book.

The decision to release it freely was deliberate. The editors considering how this complements the 'digital smarts' concept, and enhances the potential to reach a wider audience. Free to download will generate a larger reader community to discuss and debate these digitally smart ideas within educational contexts.

As a whole, the book takes the reader through a journey, exploring the 'digital smarts' of participants ranging from the early childhood sector all the way to tertiary study and to academics and their work. Throughout this journey, it becomes apparent that the use of digital technology encompasses all aspects of our educational experience, be it face-to-face or online, and continues into our workplaces.

Naturally, the crux of each chapter comes with the exploration of some aspect of 'digital smarts' and the impact of digital technology on the participants. But what exactly is this 'digital smarts' that flows through the book as a whole?

The editors do a fine job of explaining this to the reader within their informative introduction to the book. Included is a brief summary to each of the chapters which helps the reader identify the 'digital smart' concepts being specifically explored. The introduction is essential reading as it positions the reader to be able to explore the unique journey each chapter takes.

Rather than fumble with paraphrasing the editor's well written description, I'll share their own words summarising the overall concept, "… the term 'digital smarts' represents intelligent, pedagogically oriented and strategic uses of digital technologies to benefit learners of all kinds" (Wright & Forbes, 2015, p. 4).

Forearmed with this excellent foundational information I jumped into the book. I read the ten chapters in a linear fashion, but each chapter is a standalone piece of work.

As much as I'd love to sing the praises for each chapter space limits me, and as a reading journey I encourage the reader to take on their own. It did however become apparent to me that, despite the diversity of the chapters' contents, three predominant themes emerged.

The first, and perhaps primary, theme is the positioning of digital technology as secondary to pedagogy in the framework established under the broader 'digital smarts' definition.

With a term such as 'digital smarts' leading the thrust of all chapters' exploration, I would expect actual digital technology to feature strongly. Whether used by the learners or the educators themselves, and whether used as tools for supporting learning or the creation and dissemination of information, digital technology does indeed feature strongly throughout the book.

However, and not surprising considering the book's many authors' credentials, we find the strongest linking theme is the necessary pedagogical underpinning that takes place over the employed digital technologies. Technology is meant to support and enhance the learning goals, not be the focus of the undertaking.

The second theme to emerge was one of time. Whether it is the educator designing sound pedagogical learning environments or the learner utilising digital technologies, new or crucial to their learning experience, time is essential to develop the necessary skills to competently employ the technologies.

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Time of course is a finite resource and strategies are important to put in place, for you as a facilitator of learning or as the learner, sometimes both. Working smart, organising your time and involving others in this pursuit to enable or support your use of time is essential.

Finally, the third main theme, collaboration, supports the earlier two themes and often provides the glue to cement ideas with practical application of 'digital smarts' ideas.

The involvement of others features strongly in each chapter and in a large variety of ways. From direct collaborative actions, the creation of communities, side by side learning, student voice, and peer support, the chapters all show the strength and necessity of involving others in your 'digital smarts' journey whatever path it takes.

The completion of the book left me contemplating the many findings, discoveries and journeys, many of them resonating strongly with my own 'digital smarts' ideas and competencies. However, I also uncovered new relevancies within each chapter. I may not be an early childhood teacher, a lecturer or published researcher but the experiences of each chapter all had discoveries that I could adapt to my own personal work and certainly gave me food for thought.

The value of this book to any reader comes from the wide diversity of 'digital smarts' experiences from each chapter. Pick and choose what to read, read it all, but no matter your approach I believe *Digital Smarts* holds something of interest and relevance for anyone with an interest in educational learning environments and the use of digital technologies.

And, of course, the book is free.

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Subject Librarian
The University of Waikato