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Introduction to papers in this issue

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INTRODUCTION TO PAPERS IN THIS ISSUE

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It is indicative of the inherent nature of social elements across teaching and learning in organised educational contexts that a *social* thread is evident in all the articles in this issue. Our 2020 issue opens with two articles that present discussion on highly relevant topics for educators in Aotearoa New Zealand. These topics—of pedagogy within the physical nature of learning spaces and the recognition and development of individual and cross-cultural environmental identities—are also expected to be of interest to our international readers.

Claire Coleman’s article on learning through explorations of space will be a high interest item for those interested in innovative learning environments, effective group work and *social* pedagogy. Illustrated by experiences and explorations from teaching drama and the use of available spaces within both initial teacher education and primary classroom contexts, Coleman explores the influence of physical environments on student learning activities. Her evidence shows that it is not just the use of physical space in which learning occurs that matters but also the social world of student-student interaction. Coleman concludes by advocating for teacher attention to use of space in planning and to the use of social pedagogy to develop successful group work within that space.

The article by Devika Rathore et al. hits key notes of cultural identity, environmental identity, and diversity in our teacher population through migration. It would be a wonderful situation to be in if Aotearoa New Zealand’s teacher population had similar patterns of diversity as our student populations. These authors highlight aspects of cultural identity and particularly environmental identities that Indian early childhood teachers bring to their work. Their work includes developing the environmental identities of children. The role of migrant teachers’ personal and cultural identity and beliefs in teacher practice within another socio-cultural context is an aspect of teacher professional learning very relevant across learning areas and across sectors. *Teachers and Curriculum* is keen to include more articles that focus on improving of cross-cultural understanding and collaboration, recognition and appreciation of diversity and the learning culture for all learners.

Two research articles, one by Judith Mills and one by Zachariah Benton Hurdle, continue a regular *Teachers and Curriculum* subject area, that of research into mathematics education. Judith Mills explores the revision of a framework for teachers of mathematics to use in their reflective practice. It was teacher knowledge of students’ prior knowledge and cultural knowledges that was found to be a missing element in previous frameworks. Her work reinforces the connection between professional knowledge and classroom practice. Through the categories in the framework, teachers’ classroom practices can be given closer attention, with potential use as the basis for teacher inquiry.

Zachariah Benton Hurdle’s article speaks to teacher development in the area of mathematics education. His math content focus is on statistics and geometry—areas in middle school mathematics that, he argues, receive less attention than other areas. In his research using qualitative and quantitative methods, two forms of teacher professional learning—lecture-based and active small group workshops using materials—were explored in relation to teacher confidence and anxiety. The outcomes of Hurdle’s study are specific and practical.

Rachel Poultney and Dianne Forbes share practical ideas involving teacher learning based on a whole school Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (TLIF) project on resilience. This sharing in itself is an expression of collegiality and reflects the collaborative nature of professional learning, a strength of New Zealand’s education system. In this article, *social* is visible in the relational aspects of a whole school approach towards a consensus on the nature and language of resilience, the use and evaluation of resources, and acknowledgment of the importance of individual wellbeing and school culture for teachers as well as learners.

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Julie Meates' article also expresses concern for mental health and wellbeing of young people. She uses a substantial body of evidence to show how high levels of technology use and *social* interactions in virtual/digitally enhanced spaces can have a potential range of negative psychological impacts on self/individuals. Having worked in the 1980s at the cutting edge of satellite imaging overseas, Julie has an ongoing interest in the use of technology and a genuine concern for balancing our discussions regarding young people's use of technology. It is not usual for *Teachers and Curriculum* to publish articles with extensive references; however, as Julie herself puts it, "there is such a need for such busy professionals to realise the deluge of comprehensive and reliable research in this area and if people have the references they may have a moment to look things up. It is incredibly concerning what young people are being exposed to and at what age. The more information teachers and educators, and politicians have, the better and, potentially, the more reliable these decisions".

The 2020 General Issue of *Teachers and Curriculum* concludes strongly with three articles on research related to tertiary education. Ayşemine Dinçer and Fatma Bikmaz's article examines two teacher education models and compares student teachers' concerns about teaching. Gamze Kasalak and Miray Dağyar's concern is student satisfaction with their university of study, and Frances Edwards' concern is tertiary educators' assessment literacy.

Teacher development is a topic of interest in policy and teacher education programmes internationally. The nature of teachers' concerns are also very relevant and timely. While Ayşemine Dinçer's and Fatma Bikmaz's article, based on quantitative research examined in parallel to qualitative studies, is important for Turkey, it also offers readers from other nations insights into points of difference and critique. There are similarities and also specific differences, challenges and opportunities that pertain to individual nations regarding both aspects of teaching that are of concern to pre-service teachers, teacher education models, and the situational and contextual features of state education systems.

Gamze Kasalak and Miray Dağyar's article reports on a study that used structural equation modelling to explore the relationship between university students' satisfaction with the university, resource management and metacognitive self-regulatory learning strategies. The data were collected from 364 undergraduate students at a university in Turkey. Those lecturers in higher education who are in positions where their institutions are demanding students be provided with more and more means of support to ensure timely completion, might be heartened to learn that students being aware of their "own learning, controlling their own cognition and using self-regulatory learning strategies positively affects their satisfaction from the institution they are studying" (p. 82). These authors allude to how important a person's self-concept and confidence in having the needed capabilities are, particularly in *social* performative spaces like university study.

Frances Edwards provides a very topical item based on a concern for assessment literacy (for summative purposes) of tertiary educators. Edwards shares a rubric developed through her own research and supported by evidence from a pilot study as one potentially helpful tool. The agency of tertiary educators is emphasised, along with *social/collegial* ways of working, in the co-construction of specific content and context dependent dimensions. Use of the tool and the recommended process of modification, Edwards argues, supports ownership and investment in the resulting rubric and an awareness of elements of assessment literacy in preparation for use of the tool for self and peer assessment.

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