

## **Editorial 25(1)**

The current climate for education is challenging. While governments place such store on literacy and numeracy, educators know that is a political response to the huge impact of the movement of peoples across the globe. It represents a short-sighted solution and the high-stakes testing very often does not really test what it claims to do. As I write this, Sydney has just hosted the Future Schools Expo, at which schools that were innovating in some way had a chance to showcase the outcomes for their students. Some innovations were in the design of learning spaces, some were in the pedagogy that technology enables, some were in the structure of the school day and so on. The added input of the experience of keynotes like Charles Leadbetter enriched the experience for participants. Principals that I met came from every Australian state and from near neighbours. Some of the important things that educational settings foster are the subjects of articles in this issue: places for social interactions, for feeling supported, for developing intercultural understandings and respect, for appreciating different world views and for knowing your own learning preferences.

Hemmings writes about self-efficacy, positioning his study with early career academics. He finds that experience is a source of self-efficacy for early career academics. So, to, are positive social interactions, self-reflection and mentoring. The article is a reminder that in all educational settings, the educator does not arrive fully formed and the journey has growth stages and requires support.

Howes and Goodman-Delahunty conducted a study about teachers' career decisions about staying or leaving. Strong in the retention factors is personal fulfilment and the recommendations of this research are about fostering collegial relationships and providing opportunities through retraining or shared leadership. The discussion suggests the importance of schools (or any education settings) being places of mutual respect and operating as communities of professional learning.

Jackson-Barrett, Price Stomski and Walker comment on ways of working as Western researchers with Aboriginal communities, navigating ethical protocols. This is a topic dear to my heart, as I have just completed funded research with colleagues in two other universities involved in arts-based service learning with Indigenous communities. The authors draw on the work of Indigenous scholars. They stress the importance of taking 'country' into account as researchers, and negotiate the permissions that may enable the research in consultation with the community and its Elders. The learning that the researchers experienced included learning about different world views and ways of interpreting questions. Such sharing of research experiences facilitates the process for future researchers and enables respectful relationships between researchers and communities.

Wright and Stokes propose that measuring learning styles assist the development of strategies in teaching in general and in particular with economics. Their study measures the effectiveness of using Visual/Aural/Reading and Kinesthetic (VARK) preferences for

learning. The researchers couple this with a consideration of relevance for the students based on the students' prior learning backgrounds. They use elements of a model that encourages application of mathematical knowledge, use of hands-on tools, incorporation of real life contexts and positive dispositions to mathematics. Surveys of student satisfaction confirmed positive responses to students' different learning styles being taken into account.

Duc Nga Tran engages with the vexed business of evaluating teaching in higher education. Reviewing the ways in which evaluation has evolved, the researcher describes approaches that are underpinned by teacher-centred conceptions of teaching, as well as the learning-focused approach underpinned by student-centred conceptions of teaching, to bring about change to teaching practice. This collection of articles provides a perspective on international research that sees us as continually learning together.

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Editor