Editorial 25(3)

It is remarkable that academics delivering diversity units wonder whether preservice teachers will see the relevance of what they are discussing while adolescents in schools, given the opportunity to discuss and research global issues, launch straight into them. This issue of IIER explores important global issues. In the first article, Balkar writes of school culture, teacher empowerment and decision-making. The beneficiaries of this kind of school culture are students via improved teacher performance and, while this study was conducted in Turkey, the research has universal implications. The findings included growth in confidence, being innovative, being open to change and sharing management. It is certainly the case that where, teachers are empowered, they will be able to do the same for their students. The author argues that empowerment provides the opportunity for trying new ideas and building capacity.

The professional identity of preservice teachers is Beltman and her co-authors' concern. The complexity of the journey towards the development of such an identity has occupied the minds of researchers as they focus on possible selves and the tensions between expectation and reality for the preservice teacher. Using drawings as data collection, Beltman et al coded data into categories. She comments that the joy of the teachers as exemplified in selected drawings and the confidence with which they face the work is indicative of preservice teachers who have yet to experience the classroom as a teacher. Consequently, these drawings provide base line data and allow educators to track changes that occur in the journey to professional capability.

Cheema and Sheridan research mathematics anxiety and mathematics achievement and the role that homework plays in achievement scores. In a society increasingly preoccupied with testing, these results show the benefits of homework. The authors suggest that future research might usefully consider samples from other countries, achievement in subjects other than mathematics, and populations other than 15-year old students.

Attention is turned to physical education in Dervent's paper. In action research, the author drew on a reflective thinking framework (Taggart & Wilson, 1998), journals of preservice teachers and videos of micro teaching to focus on application of knowledge. The data includes the preservice teachers' recording of observations as students learn, whether they demonstrate they now understand the need to warm up the body before exercise and games, whether they interact and share. The data also shows the reflections about the importance of different socio-cultural environments as they learn to teach. The author argues for training and practice in reflective thinking to ensure planning takes into account student needs.

Heggart's article focuses on civics and citizenship, providing a framework to analyse the effectiveness of programs developing active citizenship. Under activism, the author groups volunteering, awareness raising and the kind of civic engagement that builds social capital. As an example of a program, the author discusses school students' making of films on issues important to their local community, and displaying them at a film festival. The

framework explores partnerships, agency, authentic learning, transferable skills and active engagement with community resources.

Thesis by publication is the topic of Merga's research and it acknowledges contemporary academic culture. The author comments on literature that supports that few doctorates contribute to social, economic or political change. The author argues for this kind of doctorate, in its dissemination of new ideas, its extension to feedback from a supervisory panel and its empowering of autonomy on the research journey.

Miles' article focuses on case study as a way of providing accounts of places and practices and context-dependent knowledge in educational research. Miles considers the pros and cons and makes a very useful contribution by considering case study as practical knowledge, a case of a particular thing, understood through analysis. It is a timely defence.

The article by Northcote, Gosselin, Reynaud, Kilgour and Anderson considers online teaching in the second phase of an ongoing project. Universities increasingly turn to online mode. The authors examine threshold concepts, attitudes and self-efficacy levels of academics tasked with this form of delivery of courses. The study reported in the article focuses on a group of academics acquiring online teaching skills. While the authors make no claim about generalisability, the study is a very interesting one and is outlined in detail. Some of the threshold concepts include that technology has a pedagogical purpose that can provide personalised learning. Another concept emphasised the importance of interaction in online learning. Academics' attitudes changed about themselves as online teachers and course designers as their confidence levels increased. The rigorous analysis of data makes this a study that is important to read.

Thank you to all the authors who've made this issue varied and engaging; and to the review team and editorial team who support those authors.

Anne Power
Editor