Editorial 27(4)

The papers in this issue have interesting intersections in online learning (papers by Arko-Schemfuor; Crews and Parker), second language learning (papers by Farahian; Nemati, Alavi, Mohebbi and Panahi; Razavipour and Yousefi; and Rozati). Mathematics and science enter the discourse (papers by Albadi; Joyce, Hine and Anderton). Pre-service teacher educators will also welcome papers on induction (Kearney) and special education (Lombardo-Graves; and von Ahlefeld Nisser)

Albadi's study is important, pointing to the effect on learning physics when reading in Arabic. The study was conducted with 80 Year 10 students, completing a cloze passage. The results confirmed initial expressions of reading difficulty that emerged from informal conversations between the researcher and participating students. These students were unable to suggest conceptually correct answers for most of the gaps in the cloze passage. The suggestion of the existence of a specialist language barrier in Arabic follows research that has been conducted using English texts in physics. Given the global need for students in physics, this is a significant finding and points to the importance of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in this field.

Online learning is an issue that arises in several papers in this issue. The paper by Arko-Achemfuor addresses the difficulties of distance education in South Africa. The study, conducted with 117 students, found serious gaps in the provision of support services to students as well as the access the students have to the support services offered by The University of South Africa. The increase in student numbers had not been accompanied by a corresponding increase in personnel and other support services. The challenges that students face in accessing the support services included economic constraints, social factors and physical barriers, which impact negatively on their studies and learning experiences. A strong recommendation is included to increase computer laboratories at the regional centres to enable more students to use the facilities at peak demand times. This is a reminder for universities using Open Distance Learning.

Cheema and Asrar-ul-Haq have investigated morale and staff participation and shortage, looking at the link between staff-centred organisational factors and organisational performance, within the special context of high schools across nationally representative samples from 64 countries and economies. Their data was drawn from PISA 2012 school (n=17,293) surveys. School SES turned out to be the single most important predictor of school performance. The results point to the importance of staff-centred factors in explaining variation in organisational performance.

The paper by Crews and Parker raises some similar and some different issues from the Arko-Achemfuor paper. They discuss some of the benefits and challenges for implementing online learning in developing countries (in this case, Cambodia). They document how an online course, based on authentic learning principles was designed and implemented to provide Cambodian university students with their first opportunity to experience online learning. The authors note that an expectation that the students would

feel confident in initiating online communication directly with the facilitators may have been too ambitious. The most significant finding in this study is that, although students did not complete the Tasks, they did actively engage with the content. They were interested in online learning, and will benefit when both teacher and student knowledge are developed, to prepare them for successful online learning.

Datta Roy and Lavery write about experiences of overseas trained teachers seeking public school positions in Western Australia and South Australia. Their study explored the different issues that twelve overseas trained teachers experienced before obtaining a teaching position in a public secondary school in either state. The results indicate that participants experienced the following challenges: lack of information on post immigration life in Australia; registration delays; inconsistency in English language requirements; difficult living conditions in the country areas; and a perceived lack of consistency in the teacher orientation programs provided. The authors offer two recommendations. First, it is imperative that the Education Department websites are consistently updated with relevant and appropriate information, including curriculum frameworks, for the benefit of all teachers, especially those from overseas. Second, there should be effective, ongoing teacher orientation and school-based induction for new overseas trained teachers, before they take on their classroom responsibilities.

A metacognitive writing questionnaire for EFL learners is validated in a paper by Farahian. In the study a confirmatory factor analysis was run to refine a 2014 scale and construct the final questionnaire. The findings led to a model comprising two factors of knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition represented in a 36-item questionnaire. Future research is needed to refine the model and identify the nature of the relationships among the factors.

Drawing upon student narratives and reflective journals, Gökmenoğlu reports on how a service-learning course conducted for Turkish pre-service teachers studying in Northern Cyprus transformed their attitudes towards their local Cypriot communities. Her article gives emphasis to extending service-learning research beyond the usual topics of course design and development, to give greater attention to impacts upon students' sense of belonging and adaptation to a new community.

Joyce, Hine and Anderton conducted a study to look for the association between secondary mathematics and first year university performance in health sciences. Results showed that a higher percentage of Biomedical Science, and Physiotherapy students undertook advanced mathematics at secondary school than students in Exercise and Sports Science, Physical Education, and Nursing, who recorded lower secondary school mathematics result scores from an elementary mathematics course studied. Students opting to study a lower level of mathematics at secondary school achieved lower scores than students opting to take a higher level of mathematics, and also achieved a lower first year university GPA. The unfortunate sharp decline in higher-level mathematics enrolments impacts upon first year university performance and beyond, into employment.

Teacher induction in secondary schools is the subject of Kearney's paper. Effective and ongoing induction is one of the foremost practices for alleviating the pressures that early career teachers face. The author conducted a collective case study of six different programs in independent schools, and showcased one school in particular that illustrated best practice when matched against other successful international programs. The induction program lasts for two years, which is not dependent on accreditation. Teachers who attain accreditation at Proficiency level continue with the program for the full two years. The program concludes with an exit interview, where teachers are able to talk about both the challenges of accreditation and the suitability of the program to meet their needs over the course of the first two years of employment. For the teachers, the provision of a mentor was the most useful aspect of the program at the school. The second most discussed aspect was the structured time release from classes, which has proved so successful in Scandinavian countries. This is an important paper for teacher educators and for school administration.

Lombardo-Graves' paper on resiliency focuses attention on a self-efficacy scale designed specifically to measure initial special education teaching self-efficacy. The pre-service Special Educator Efficacy Scale (SEES-I) instrument was administered to 243 pre-service special education teacher candidates from two institutions. The survey items for the scale are generously included as Appendix A.

A paper by Nemati, Alavi, Mohebbi and Panahi is concerned with feedback and its effect on L2 learners. Participants were 311 students at three Iranian language proficiencies who completed a multi-sectioned questionnaire about teachers' feedback practices. The last sections were about their reactions and feelings after receiving their writing with teacher's feedback. They all were in favour of direct unfocused feedback, but they had different viewpoints on satisfaction with their teachers' feedback practices, the need to revise their writing, the targeted structures, and their feelings after receiving feedback. More than half of the students felt that their teachers never mentioned positive points about learners' writing. The findings point to the necessity for teachers to encourage revising written work, focusing on language idioms.

Razavipour and Yousefi write about teachers' job satisfaction and institutional climate. Their study is a mixed-method one, exploring the relationship between organisational climate and EFL teachers' job satisfaction in Iran. A total of 128 male and female EFL teachers responded to two scales, one assessing school organisational climate and the second assessing teachers' job satisfaction, with aspects such as promotion and job security. Interviews were held with 12 participants. Findings revealed that teachers in both public and private language institutes were moderately dissatisfied with their jobs, feeling a lack of autonomy, and they do not perceive their institutional climates to be favourable. As the authors admit, the study barely scratched the surface of one of the myriad of organisational issues at stake in English language teaching.

The question of teaching efficacy is addressed by Rozati using various scales. Professional identity emerged as a better predictor of EFL teachers' teaching efficacy. Considering the findings of the study, the author recommends that teacher trainers and administrators

organise preparation conferences and workshops in order to familiarise EFL teachers with both practical and theoretical bases of teachers' identity, and also improve their actual teaching efficacy. Additionally, as pointed out by Hall (1968), identity in general is regarded as a concept which is open to interpretation; therefore it does not help credibility to measure identity through a questionnaire alone. A key idea for further research is to scrutinise EFL teachers' professional and institutional identity using more open-form instruments (such as reflective journals).

The paper by von Ahlefeld Nisser is about promoting an inclusive school culture. The data consists of critical reflection (collaborative meta-consultation) in groups of special education professionals (consultants, n=12) and one researcher. Besides identifying some basic conditions, certain strategies and approaches have been identified to make collaborative consultation an inclusive process. The focus of this article was to understand collaborative learning among teachers in terms of collaborative consultation. The analysis has shown that collaborative consultation, which takes its point of departure from communicative theory, offers opportunities to unite different interpretations of evidence-based research with different understandings of experienced practice. Moreover, because of its inclusive and democratic dimensions, communicative theory is useful in the field of collaborative learning among teachers as it can contribute to an inclusive school culture.

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