

Editorial 26(1)

Welcome to the first issue of 2016, an issue that follows in the wake of some large issues in the latter part of 2015. In the first article in this issue, Askew, Dixon, McCormick, Callaghan, Wang and Shulruf have considered why academics take on doctoral supervision. The paper presents an argument that the need for doctoral supervision exceeds the current supply of willing, qualified supervisors due, in part at least, to workload and recognition. As the authors observe, supported by 2016 research, these factors may collide. The authors define the doctoral journey and the supervision as complex teaching and learning experiences. They draw attention to the extra support required by international students. This is a timely article that calls for a theory and evidence based systematic approach to supervision, which provides supervisors with effective tools, a just workload and an environment where supervisors feel supported as well as being held accountable for their supervision responsibilities.

Bowles, Scull, Hattie, Clinton, Larkins, Cicconi, Kumar and Arnup have argued for improved service delivery from school psychologists and special education teachers. Their paper is in the context of changing legal requirements, advocating collaboration and joint consultation as best practice within a response to intervention framework. The authors commend assessment which is grounded in asset and strength based models. Clinical approaches equip a teacher to more effectively make an individual assessment of student learning and to understand how the student is going to get to the level of learning intended. The authors confirm that many recent models of teaching assume assessment for intervention is at the core of the teachers' daily practice. They recommend a systematic procedure when students have been assessed as requiring Tier 2 or 3 interventions. They align with earlier research that, in the practice of assessment in school settings, multidisciplinary teams within an instructional consultation framework should become the norm. For this to occur, the authors call for a broadening of teacher knowledge and skills to assess in some assessments previously done by specialists.

McCarthy's paper presents a narrative that explores how parents living in rural and remote areas selected a secondary boarding school for their child. The paper sits in the context of school choice, given the added complexity of distance, along with social and cultural issues. Using qualitative data, the author presents the importance that parents perceive for their children, where home life is running large cattle stations in remote areas, of knowing how to both be involved in a wider community and to manage independence from family. Parents considered wellbeing, happiness and fulfilment as specific goals for their children and looked for educational sites where they felt those would be likely outcomes. The author found that academic outcomes may not be the first consideration, as parents looked for 'good values'; and these sat alongside some expressed perceptions of inequity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at the researched boarding school.

Mjaavatn, Frostad and Pijl have studied peer social interaction, based on the Two Cultures Theory (TCT) among adolescent girls and boys. The authors hypothesised preferences, including for same gender and similar characteristics. They sampled 123 students aged 14-

15 years. The authors have produced fascinating network maps of the students and found that, with regard to the similarity hypothesis, students tend to choose friends that are similar to themselves. According to TCT, girls focus more on the relational aspects of friendship, whereas boys on the other hand are more concerned with activity aspects. With regard to the same gender hypothesis, they found that girls tend to make networks with other girls, boys with other boys. Furthermore, girls tend to favour small groups where boys join larger groups. Significantly, they argue that to remove or lower gender barriers, teachers of adolescents should try to create activities that stimulate cooperation across gender.

Gender issues in the Philippines, affecting career paths in science and mathematics teaching, arise in the article by Morales, Avilla and Espinosa. The research study used a sample size of 145 pre-service teachers and one of the findings was that the pre-service teachers experienced gender inequity in their pre-university education. In the discussion, the authors suggest that, with the decreasing uptake of science and mathematics education courses, elementary education teachers might seek to improve on factors which influence students to pursue a career in science and mathematics teaching. We cannot consider that issues raised in this article are only relevant in the Philippines. In Australia, it is interesting to note that there has been one female National Chief Scientist (since inception in 1989) and one NSW Chief Scientist who is the incumbent. The position paper entitled *Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in the National Interest: A Strategic Approach* (2013, accessed at http://www.chiefscientist.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/STEMstrategy290713_FINALweb.pdf) notes that, for decades, support for research has been rationed; and interest in science and mathematics in schools and universities has declined. The advocated STEM strategy is to counter the corrosive effects of rationing, short-term support especially through terminating programs, erosion of infrastructure and the unpredictability of the critical medium to long-term investment pipeline. This article is a thoughtful contribution in this context.

Mwoma and Pillay have written about educational support for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in primary schools in Soweto, South Africa. In the context of a statistic in sub-Saharan Africa that has two out of five children who start primary school not completing their primary education, this paper raises the specific problems that HIV/AIDS has produced with specific focus on child-headed households. The study involved 107 participants, 65 of whom were orphaned or vulnerable children and 42 teachers, and its focus was on intervention measures. The government supports with school fees and a meal program. Using Bronfenbrenner's systems theory, the suggested interventions are designed to reduce the negative impact of the lack of home relationships. One such recommendation was of teachers to work with payment after school hours with OVC. Another strategy was to have a school social worker to whom OVC could be referred for additional support. A very important recommendation was to provide workshops for guardians to understand the need to supervise home study. Once again, this is a study that speaks powerfully to countries where a refugee intake produces some of the same problems. From personal experience I can say that pre-service teachers can provide the homework assistance that supports the class teachers in their role. It is a

problem that cannot be solved by any one strategy alone and I hope this article raises responses from readers with constructive suggestions.

Behaviours that are designed to damage relationships (relational aggression) are the focus of an article by Page and Smith. Their study, conducted among Cook Island adolescents, involved a personal experience questionnaire delivered to 216 male and 225 female across the high school years. Both boys and girls were most likely to report that they were targets of being called names. In terms of gender differences, girls were significantly more likely than boys to be the perpetrators of calling others names, and giving others the silent treatment. However boys were more likely to be involved in physical aggression. Teacher responses showed that many understood the process of Restorative Justice. Strategies suggested by both teachers and students included school-wide systemic responses. This paper is an addition to knowledge in that most of research in the area of physical or relational aggression has focused on Western individualist populations; and the current research offers contrasting insights.

The article by Pepper and Roberts explores how Unit Coordinators (academics who coordinate a university unit of study) see themselves as leaders of learning in higher education and whether support provided by their institutions meets their needs. The authors describe the data collection which involved writing 78 brief narratives from semi-structured interviews and the development of a purpose built website to enable widespread access to the narratives and relevant resources. From the interview data, the authors identified nine themes: teaching and assessment, starting out, managing workloads and complexity, working with sessional staff, leading learning, maintaining and improving unit quality, technology and administration, the research and teaching dilemma, and feeling isolated. The identification of these themes is the first step towards addressing them. The majority discussed how they overcame these challenges and saw merit in sharing their experiences to provide insight for the benefit of helping others. Nevertheless, it is alarming that few Unit Coordinators describe strong institutional support for their role. Instead they describe the support of mentors, colleagues and supportive discipline networks.

The gender identity of language teachers is a focus of the article by Pishghadam, Saboori, Samarvachi and Hassanzadeh. The research study sought to pay attention to factors shaping teacher quality in language teaching in Iran. Iran is a country in which three languages are taught: Persian, Arabic and English (the latter as the language of international communication). In three cities, 923 junior high school students responded to a survey about characteristics of teachers. While the scale constructed may raise some issues about the teaching of the two languages associated with the state and the religion, the findings that gender identity can be affected by the subject matter has implications for the teaching of English as a second language to people from Iranian background.

Rahmawati and Koul have written about student engagement with environmental science. Their paper is a case study of a Year 9 class (17 students) in an Australian school with students learning about ecosystems for environmental science education. The research involved substantive discussion with students both formally and informally. Co-teaching

and co-generative dialogue were features of the research; and students perceived their environmental classes provided more opportunity for relevance, student negotiation, student involvement, shared control, and open endedness. There is food for reflection from educators at many levels here.

Anne Power

Editor