

Editorial 27(2)

This IIER issue is integrally concerned with researchers who are trying to remedy situations that have frequently arisen out of inequitable early education. Bauer, Thomas and Sim write about *Mature age professionals: Factors influencing their decision to make a career change into teaching*. They present the early findings from a study that addresses the topic of mature age professionals making a career change into the secondary teaching profession. Anecdotally, mature age pre-service teachers report that school staff may not be so aware of needing to support them, as they look like they must have 'been around' for a while. However, such career changers bring the experience of their first choice of career into the classroom. Some relevant factors for change were having a passion for teaching, or wanting to be of service to others, or seeking personal fulfilment.

Buxton's very timely paper is on *Ditching deficit thinking: Changing to a culture of high expectations*. She begins by framing the paper in the *Professional Teaching Standards* that include requirements for teachers to demonstrate proficiency in Aboriginal pedagogy, history and perspectives. Her study sought to enhance understandings of how contemporary inequitable educational outcomes can and should be improved if we are to meet our international and national obligations. With Sarra, she argues that "educators have colluded too easily with the notion that Indigenous children are automatically underachievers at school. There is no basis for this belief and it is one that must be purged from our profession" (Sarra, 2009). She presents a range of recommendations that the participants in her study put forward so that teachers will feel better prepared.

Cheema and Fuller Hamilton present *Morale, participation, and shortage in White-majority and White-minority schools: Principals' perceptions*. Their review of the literature suggests that teacher-centred factors such as participation in decision making, teacher morale, and shortage of teaching staff, can affect school performance. Therefore they examined how these factors differ between White-majority and White-minority schools, both before and after controlling for school characteristics such as school type, mean socioeconomic status and student-teacher ratio, finding significant differences in teacher morale and shortage of teaching staff between White-majority and White-minority schools.

Choy, Yim and Tan's research is on *Reflective thinking among preservice teachers: A Malaysian perspective*. They looked closely at the role of reflection in pre-service teacher education, finding that reflective thinking leads to self-efficacy, self-assessment and teaching awareness. In the Malaysian context, self-assessment is crucial with the implementation of the *Malaysian Education Blueprint* (2013), which advocates the development of students who are able to think critically and creatively. This requires that preservice teachers must develop these skills in themselves as well. The research model in this study also suggested that the ability to self-reflect is crucial for the development of confidence and competence among teachers.

Cigerci and Gultekin investigate the *Use of digital stories to develop listening comprehension skills*, in the context of fourth grade primary students in Turkey. Digital stories are computer or web-based forms of traditional stories. Their findings showed that the digital stories and

the listening activities that were based on them had positive effects on the development of the listening comprehension skills of the students in an experimental group.

Evangelinou-Yiannakis's research is *A reflection on the methodology used for a qualitative longitudinal study*. She investigated the perspectives of the key stakeholders in teaching Greek as a second language in Western Australia. Participant and non-participant observation was employed following a document study and semi-structured interview modes of data collection. The multiple methodologies employed by the researcher suited the paradigm of interpretivism.

Ibrahim and Ibrahim's research is on *Communicative English language teaching in Egypt: Classroom practice and challenges*. The authors recognise that electronic means of communication have collapsed the geographical boundaries between nations, and promoted the need for a common language. Their study begins from the premise that effective English language skills are vital for Egyptian workers seeking to participate in the global economy, and wanting access to the information that forms the basis for social, educational, and economic development. However, results of their study suggest that despite all the initiatives taken by the Egyptian Ministry of Education to change English language pedagogy, traditional approaches and methods of teaching English remain in use. The authors make valuable recommendations about professional learning for teachers.

Lowe, Lummis and Morris collaborate on a paper about *Pre-service primary teachers' experiences and self-efficacy to teach music: Are they ready?* They find that pre-service teachers generally reported encouraging levels of musical engagement, but this did not translate into self-efficacy to teach music. Where pre-service teachers have themselves missed the opportunity to express themselves and create music, they have difficulty as adults fulfilling what a music educator can do: help develop sensory perception of culture, support cognitive and social development, foster critical and creative thinking and unleash the imagination. This article emphasises the importance of building pre-service teacher self-efficacy to support ongoing personal and professional engagement with music, so future generations of young people can benefit from sustained, quality music education in primary schools.

Morison and Cowley's paper is *An exploration of factors associated with student attrition and success in enabling programs*. University-based enabling programs provide a tertiary pathway for up to twenty percent of undergraduate enrolments at Australian universities. Often, the students in such programs feel as if they do not deserve an opportunity for success. Attrition from these programs and the resulting costs to students, universities and society at large is an important issue deserving research attention. The paper concludes that any attempts to reduce such attrition must focus on developing more personal interventions with students as early as possible, aimed at addressing time management, providing more flexible study options, facilitating mature age support and addressing self-confidence.

Mwoma's research is about *Children's reading ability in early primary schooling: Challenges for a Kenyan rural community*. She believes that children who do not acquire reading skills in their early grades struggle to acquire more advanced skills usually absorbed through reading.

Mwoma acknowledges that socioeconomic factors have been found to influence children's reading, where children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds have been found to read less for enjoyment than children from more privileged backgrounds. Furthermore, her study showed that starting school early came out strongly as a factor that could influence children's reading ability. Some evidence further suggested that it is imperative that children should be introduced to learning to read while they are still young so as to acquire the reading skills that will be critical when they start reading to learn in later grades.

Rodwell's very thorough research is on *A national history curriculum, racism, a moral panic and risk society theory*. He argues that the history taught in Australian school education is highly politicised, the product of a moral panic surrounding the Cronulla incidents in 2005, and of risk society thinking. He comments, quoting Taylor, that "Of all school subjects, history is the discipline most targeted by politicians" (Taylor, 2014). This paper further argues students should be enabled to appreciate these factors underpinning the national history curriculum through a more rigorous teaching of historiography in the school education.

Yoo, Carter and Larkin present a paper on *Making research relevant through an engagement of identities*. They drew on an initiative aimed to develop teachers' capacity as writers; knowledge of, confidence in, and pedagogical skills in the teaching of writing; knowledge and skills in action research; and to develop communities of writers with ongoing teacher and student participation. Guided by research informed practices in teaching writing, the focus became the development of teachers as writers. A key implication is the value of acknowledging and cultivating the unique skill-sets involved in undertaking research as knowledge exchange.

We value the input of our authors and find it felicitous when there are threads that unite them in the directions of their research.

Anne Power

IIER Editor

The importance of being a good copy editor

Some recent "encounters" during IIER copy editing could be drawn to the attention of our readers. When copy editing encounters an in text citation "Author (5005)", one could wonder, how did that arise? It turned out that the year should have been 2004, and that 5005 was the Australian postcode for Author's university. In the first page of the online reference, the first four digit number was "5005" in the middle of the page, with the desired number, year "2004" not appearing until the last line of the first page. Perhaps some not so intelligent AI agent was programmed to recognise the first four digit number on the first page as the year of publication?

Another recent "encounter" was during reference checking, which occupies a high proportion of my copy editing time. I noted an abstract containing the sentence: '600 teachers, from both Government and Private Schools, have been drowned by random sampling'. The abstract was for a quantitative study, bringing to mind a somewhat mischievous image of 600 readers, drowning in a flooded river of statistical data pouring out relentlessly from an *SPSS* mill. I'll not mention the journal, but if you *Google* the exact phrase

The serious point behind these anecdotes is that English language academic journals such as IIER will have to work harder at maintaining a high standard of copy editing, as numbers of articles per year increases – we have 12 in 27(2) – and as the proportion of ESL authors increases. We are hoping that the next expansion of IIER's editorial staff will include volunteers with the skills and patience needed to be a good copy editor, as well as being a good provider of editorial advice to aspiring authors.

A note about digital object identifiers ('DOIs')

Recently an article accepted for IIER 27(2) was withdrawn at the request of the authors. The problem was that they felt obliged to conform with institutional pressures to publish only in journals which provide DOIs. I emailed an explanation of IIER's 'no DOI' status to the authors:

IIER does not use DOIs, for three reasons. Firstly, DOIs are a service a publisher has to purchase. As an open access journal with no income from subscriptions or from page charges, and limited sponsorship, IIER cannot afford to buy DOIs. Secondly, DOIs are not needed. We give readers a reliable and enduring URL for each article, so our view is that no more is needed. We are aware that many publishers, especially the publishers of recently established journals, project the attitude that a DOI is a mark of prestige, importance, higher status, etc. An attitude that IIER does not share. Thirdly, having to upload data to a DOI server would be extra work for the website manager (that is, for me).

So the case against indulging in the use of DOIs is very strong indeed.

But, sadly (it was a good article), not strong enough.

Roger Atkinson

IIER Associate Editor