

Editorial

In this, the second issue of the 2008 online edition of *Issues in Educational Research* we offer our readers six articles addressing cognitive science and curriculum related pedagogical concerns.

The first paper presented in this issue is an outcome of the annual Research Conference hosted by the *NSW Institute of Educational Research* branch in Sydney in May. As a productive incentive in supporting early career researchers, the NSWIER Executive Board extends an invitation for Conference delegates to submit their work for publication in the IIER journal. This valuable collaboration between the state branches and the IIER is beneficial in furthering the work of scholarship in educational research across the wider research community.

In the article *Goodwin* reports on preliminary findings of her doctoral research investigating technological intervention in the early mathematics classroom. Goodwin's initial findings give evidence for more advanced conceptualisation of fractions present among kindergarten aged students exposed to multimedia tools as part of their learning.

The second article by *Hanham and McCormick*, addresses the issue of student attitudes towards group work and its relation to self-efficacy, with the latter being more closely aligned to aspects of collaboration in learning settings.

In article three, *Lewis, Mansfield and Baudains* draw attention to the teaching of *values education* through the environmental curriculum. They showcase three small scale primary school projects on sustainability conducted in WA and which advocate the significance of 'real-life' contextual learning activities for the promotion of the *values in education* agenda.

On the issue of learning as a function of innovative pedagogical tools, *O'Gara* presents a study conducted in Italy, in which drama methods were introduced to teach language grammar. The study shows that alternative methods of teaching, such as the use of drama in the instruction of verb tenses were beneficial in the transmission of subject knowledge in classroom context.

In a thought provoking article, *O'Sullivan, Carroll, and Cavanagh* explore the contemplation by teachers on the reform of the secondary curriculum in NSW. They claim that in times of significant change to the working lives and aligned educational practices teachers draw on their understandings of the reform process to manage transformation. They demonstrated that the transition is most successful in contexts of abundant time, deliberation and resources offered in an environment of professional support.

The final article, contributed by *Tan, Dawson and Venville* is located in the area of gifted and talented education, and examines the use of cognitive organisers as an independent learning strategy among Year 9 secondary students. The authors conclude that the tendency by students to use cognitive organisers is reliant upon the objectives of the

learning task at hand, and not on personal learning preferences. This article stimulates thinking about the broader issues surrounding the provision of various learning strategies and tools as an end in themselves. It is a reminder that the best learning tools are meaningless unless they are effectively applied to the learning task at hand.

We hope that you will find the current collection of articles both interesting and of suitable intellectual rigour for stimulating debate around some of the most current issues in educational research and scholarship.

We also acknowledge the scholarly work of the Editorial team and the Review Board in bringing this latest issue to completion.

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Associate Editor