

Editorial 28(2)

Welcome to this issue, overflowing with wonderful research. Aflalo commences with a searching look at the changed perceptions of the nature of science and religious beliefs. In a College of Education in Israel, the participants were 205 pre-service teachers, both Jewish and Muslim. Following the course, some changed perceptions were evident in naive attitudes about science. However in contrast to the secular students, there was no statistically significant change in the perception of the religious students of the superiority of religion and society over science. They expressed their ideas in some well-captured excerpts of interviews. The author concludes that the main objective, therefore, should be to encourage dialogue that advances critical thought.

Problem-based learning is once again in the forefront of educational inquiry. Bachtiar, Zubaidah, Corebima and Indriwati conducted research with tenth grade students in Indonesia. An integration of problem based learning and cooperative learning produced improvement of spiritual and social attitudes of students with upper academic ability. Bowles and Scull looked at teacher preparedness for change. Using the eight factors of the adaptive change model (ACM), the authors propose a template for intervention in schools. Consistent with transformational learning, teachers manage the change process for the student and, simultaneously, are agents of change for the school.

The idea of the flipped classroom is examined by Cagande and Jugar; and their findings from a study of 155 students were that understanding may be enhanced but there may be no effect on motivation. The use of flipped classrooms requires the teacher to create engaging off-class material. It will be interesting to see if the authors pursue a follow-up study with the teachers, some of whose comments are included in the paper. Çimen and Özgan designed a study to examine the contributing and damaging factors relating to the psychological capital of teachers. Their findings were that a supportive organisational climate, collaboration, communication, convenient physical conditions of the school, parent engagement, professional characteristics and positive experiences were contributors to teachers' psychological capital. The researchers suggest that psychological capital be considered in the preparation of professional development programs intending to increase positive attitudes to teaching.

In Australia, self-regulated learning is one of the aspects of quality teaching. Cosnefroy, Fenouillet, Mazé and Bonnefoy, in France, developed a model of self-regulated learning (SRL) failure and tested, with specific attention to the relationship between disorganisation and procrastination and SRL. The authors recommend that future research should study correlations with academic performance using course-specific measures of procrastination and disorganisation. Dorrington's article on a personalised learning program, in a time of rapidly emerging digital technologies, has a fascinating focus on the perceptions of Academic Advisors, Heads of Year and parents' perceptions of the program. Parents and caregivers tended to focus on task strategies, with time management and organisational skills frequently highlighted. Data from Academic Advisors showed they valued their relationships with their students in a way that mirrored

the value placed on these relationships by parents. Heads of Year noted improvements in the attitudes of some students, and pointed to examples where the program had supported them in fostering the wellbeing of students.

A study of English teacher training courses in Iran, by Ganji, Ketabi and Shahnazari, found that these courses offered a convenient schedule for students and focused on practical teaching techniques. However, they suffered from problems such as the students' low knowledge of general English along with the lack of a written syllabus, which stifled the teachers' creativity. The authors make some useful recommendations. Ghaith's article is also about teaching English as a foreign language. His study with experienced teachers revealed that the participants tended to perceive the more concrete cooperative learning methods were more congruent to their practices. Likewise, the study showed that all cooperative learning methods and strategies are valued, despite implementation challenges related to teacher knowledge, proper implementation and curriculum alignment.

Stages of concern (SoC) are at the heart of the article by Gudyanga and Jita. During a period of five years of curriculum reform, teachers have constructed SoC profiles. In the research, self-concerns were found to be dominant among the participants. Multivariate analysis of variance showed no significant differences between teachers' SoC profiles and their years of experience with the reform. This suggests that any programs of support offered so far may have had no significant impact in shifting teachers' SoC profiles. The authors suggest that the gap between policymakers' envisaged classroom practices and teachers' actual practices during reform implementation could be narrowed when teachers' challenges and internal constraints during the adoption process are adequately resolved.

Juuti, Christophersen, Elstad, Solhaug and Turmo investigate instructional self-efficacy amongst pre-service teachers studying at a Finnish university. In a quantitative study using structural equation modelling, they found important negative influences from dealing with problem behaviour, whilst important positive factors included supervisor's feedback and perceived practical examples in general pedagogy courses. Murcia and Pepper's article uses a social impact perspective for presenting a notable evaluation of the STEM professional learning program conducted for primary school teachers by Western Australia's Scitech, a science centre based in Perth but having a regional outreach. They provide a valuable model for evaluating similar centres in other states and countries, and also offer general insights into desirable features for STEM professional learning that may be provided by other agencies.

Surface approaches to learning is a common place problem in university classes, investigated here by Robinson who used two instruments, a surface responding inventory and Arnett's inventory of sensation seeking, administered to 61 international students studying for a degree in accounting. His main conclusion is that as academic learning may well require effort and stress, pedagogy that avoids those experiences may reduce learning. Another topic also important in university education is discussed by Savage and Pollard, who as academic developers in an Australian university interviewed course leaders about faculty tensions encountered during curriculum review and development processes. They present the case for a critical inquiry approach to curriculum debate, viewing it as a

legitimate method for supporting course leaders to facilitate pedagogical change at the level of the faculty course team.

The article by Sheffield, Blackley and Moro is another Western Australian based study, also concerned with professional learning for school teachers, with particular relevance for integrating digital technologies into their teaching of the new Australian curriculum for Design and Technologies. Based upon collaboration through a distributed digital learning network or "cluster", their model has a special importance for teachers and schools in regional and remote areas.

With 15 articles, IIER 28(2) continues our gradual increase in the number of articles per issue. However, IIER's increases in the number of submissions per year is certainly not gradual. After 124 submissions in 2015, 196 in 2016, and 306 in 2017, our forward estimate for 2018's number of submissions is about 490 (based on 121 submissions for January-March). Regrettably, IIER's acceptance rate is falling, where 'regrettably' is an apt descriptor, because the academic quality of submissions is rising. Rising quality is especially notable in the cases of authors of declined articles who return with a new submission that incorporates all of the improvements suggested in IIER's editorial advice, but does not address deficiencies not identified in the advice. We now make some use of a standard paragraph added to editorial advice:

We regret that owing to time constraints we cannot offer a comprehensive description of all problems with a submission, and a full detailing of the additional research work that is needed to attain a good standard for publication in an international journal.

One of the purposes for editorials such as this one is to reflect upon elements of editorial policy as revealed by the contents of an issue. In the paragraphs above, an underlying perspective is one that is now becoming more prominent in IIER's daily operations, namely how to answer the question, "Does this article present a significant issue in educational research?" That is a difficult question, because the concept of a 'significant issue' is highly subjective. To illustrate, it interacts with another question, "Does this article provide a good representation of a topic and context that is under-represented in the international literature?" To give another illustration, a researcher who specialises in educational psychometrics (for example) may have an identification of 'significant issues' that is markedly different from identifications by researchers in (for example) educational technology, or early childhood literacy, or mathematics teaching and learning, etc.

So the editorial paragraphs above are in part a brief reflection on how we may refine the concept of 'significant issues' to help accommodate an escalating growth rate in number of submissions. Only a brief reflection, as we need to keep up the editorial work pace to accommodate the estimated number of about 370 submissions still to come during the rest of 2018.

Anne Power

Editor IER

Roger Atkinson

Associate Editor and IER Website Manager

Clare McBeath

Publisher IER

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