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Teacher Education Advancement Network Journal

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Editorial

TEAN presents the 16th issue of the TEAN journal here with a range of papers on very interesting and useful topics. We are as ever highly indebted to our reviewers whose careful and constructive reviews are supportive and helpful as our authors proceed to publication. If you would like to be involved in the journal or have an idea for a paper for the journal, please get in touch with alison.jackson@cumbria.ac.uk

Congratulations to all our authors – we are sure you will find plenty of thought-provoking topics to stimulate your thinking.

Sarah Steadman from King's College, London starts this issue for us with a paper exploring the meaning of practice in relation to learning to teach. She asks us to reflect upon the many definitions of practice in a bid to find a definition of what practice means for beginning teachers. She warns of the danger of reducing practice to rehearsal and approximations of practice and the detrimental effect that this could have on the professional ability to be adaptive to different context. Sarah's conclusion is that the transformative and inherently social definition of practice is most helpful and productive in the development of resilient and adaptive teaching professionals.

An interesting way to follow this is our next paper from **Geraint Davies and Sioned Hughes from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David** who investigated why someone might choose to become a teacher – or why not. They asked student teachers on a third year BA in Primary Education with QTS why they chose teaching as a career and what challenges they had faced. Results showed a range of factors which had prompted this career intention – both intrinsic and extrinsic – and particular challenge in such things as high levels of accountability, the pressure of monitoring, the continual demand for change and the perceived lack of respect given to the profession. They conclude their paper with some useful recommendations drawn from their research.

Rick Tynan and Robert Bryn Jones from Liverpool John Moores University discuss their research into assessing trainee secondary teachers on school placement in England. They looked particularly at subject knowledge and overall teaching grades and report on a statistical analysis of numerical grades awarded on progress review forms completed by mentors in schools using the teaching competencies described in Teachers' Standards in England. There are some interesting, and somewhat surprising, results which Rick and Robert suggest are worth further investigation and some hints the mentors always did perceive subject matter content knowledge as an indicator of good pedagogy or overall teaching skill.

Edina Kulenovic from the University of Cumbria researched student peer assessment as a learning tool and a way of enhancing student learning. Her aim was to determine if peer review, as part of formative assessment, can improve student understanding of the assessment process, which, in turn, should improve student learning. The study was designed as a resource for teaching staff, who may wish to consider integrating student peer assessment in their modules. Edina found that there are

clear benefits of using student peer review in teaching in order to gain a better understanding of the assessment process and suggests that the project could be a useful preparation for a larger study.

Ross Purves and Mark Pulsford from De Montfort University report on research into student perceptions of the routes and selection processes for, in this case, undergraduate Education Studies. Their title quotes one individual's response: 'I came out feeling scared and pressured, and just like a number'. They speak of the 'often-neglected voice' of applicants and the 'significant personal milestone' it represents. The findings of their research cover 'assumed' differences between university and school based routes, the race to secure a place, 'the system'. Ross and Mark provide us with implications and recommendations to break down perceived distinctions between routes and concentrate on an aim for all to achieve top quality teacher education.

Pete Boyd from the University of Cumbria and Andy Ash from the Deep Learning Teaching School Alliance, Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary School, Greasby, UK take us into the realm of the Singapore Maths mastery approach. They investigated changing strategies and beliefs of Primary School teachers in England as they engage with a sustained curriculum development project. The focus was teachers working with a commercially available text book based scheme which is informed by Singapore Maths mastery approaches. They suggest that the study has indicated that developing mastery approaches in mathematics is a change project with both technical and cultural elements that challenges teachers to re-evaluate their classroom strategies, but also their underpinning beliefs.

Kamal Ahmed from the University of Cumbria undertook an Action Research Project into Teaching Critical Thinking and Writing in Higher Education. The study identified some of the challenges often faced by students in HE and explored how a targeted intervention could potentially develop students' understanding and application of Critical Thinking and Critical Writing. Students found that a targeted workshop to develop and enhance these skills was beneficial. Participant feedback revealed the workshop had a positive impact on all the students which suggests the need for such interventions in order to suitably equip students with the 'critical' demands of studying.

Lisa Murtagh and Elizabeth Birchinal from the University of Manchester focussed on developing communities of practice in school-university partnerships. Their study, which took place in England, sought to re-envisage partnership activity between universities and partnership schools through the development of a collaborative partnership model focused on developing school-university research-based practice. Teacher professional knowledge was married with the expertise of university staff to facilitate systematic school-based enquiry. They conclude that shared working should be encouraged but warn that setting up Communities of Practice is a complex undertaking. They suggest that the key to developing school-university partnerships may lie in seeking opportunities for developing genuine models of collaboration and a commitment to a spirit of shared learning.

A.Jackson

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