

Editorial

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We begin this issue with an article from **Anthony Hudson** providing a focused literature review used to inform his study on the academic identity of Access Higher Education tutors. Drawing on literature

from Anglophone and European education systems, his review highlights the challenges of defining professional identity and rehearses the argument for developing a deeper understanding of teacher professional identity. The review

identifies a number of gaps in the literature, in particular the limited attention given to the academic identity of experienced or mid-career practitioners and academic identity in further education settings in general and Access HE tutors in particular. **Matt Smith's** position paper discusses a dichotomy that lies at the heart of Initial Teacher Education – that many of those involved in pre-service teacher education identify themselves as social constructivists and espouse personal pedagogical practices that lean towards learner-centrism rather than didactic praxes but are obliged to teach in a rather more transmissionist style due to the exigencies and contingencies of the courses they run. The conclusions are that allowing adults to learn for themselves leads to both more effective learning and better teaching, but that within the parameters of the pre-service teacher education courses run at many higher education institutions in the UK, teacher educators often have to sacrifice their constructivist principles and anticipate that trainees will fill in the gaps for themselves.

Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) courses in England aim to provide sufficient subject knowledge in 'shortage subject' areas, such as mathematics and science, to enable those who attend them to then undertake Initial Teacher Training and to go on to become teachers in secondary schools.

Catherine Bell's article examines the learning experience of a group of SKE participants, and assesses whether this added significantly to their subject knowledge and helped prepare them for work in the classroom, comparing this outcome with conventional teacher trainees who had not undertaken such a course. Although this article reports on a single-site evaluation, her findings have implications for how best nationally to meet the challenge of recruiting students onto Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses in so-called 'shortage subjects' like mathematics. In her article **Alison Baker** examines the early reading experiences of white working-class trainee teachers. Primary Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) trainees who considered themselves white British working class were asked by to be interviewed for a small-scale research project. Initially the research project was focused upon the trainees' identification with characters in books that they read as children, but the discussion ranged beyond this to the reading background of their families, their experiences at school and their views of themselves as readers now. In her conclusions she argues that allowing choice and freedom in independent reading is vital. Investment in a library of texts in primary schools, outside of graded reading schemes, may serve to mitigate the damage

that library closures will do.

In each edition of *Research in Teacher Education* we invite high profile international guest authors to contribute to this publication. This month we are fortunate to have **Professor Louise Archer**, recently appointed to the Karl Mannheim Chair of Sociology of Education, at UCL's Institute of Education as our guest author. Professor Archer's primary research interests have been in identities and inequalities of 'race', gender and social class within compulsory and post-compulsory education. Her work encompasses research on Muslim pupils, the minority ethnic middle classes, British Chinese pupils, urban young people and schooling, widening participation in higher education and inequalities in science participation. She also has an interest in feminist theory and methodology. Currently, she is the Principal Investigator for the ASPIRES project, a ten year ESRC-funded study of children's science aspirations and career choices and is the Director of the five year Enterprising Science project. Previously, she was lead coordinator of the ESRC's four-year research programme, the Targeted Initiative on Science and Mathematics Education. She is a member of the editorial boards of *Journal of Education Policy*, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, and *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* and is the Vice President (Education) at the British Science Association.

This number's book reviews are provided by Janet Hoskin and Graham Robertson.

Our guest writer for the next edition of *RTe* will be Professor Martin Fautley, Director, Research in Education At the Faculty of Health, Education, and Life Science, Birmingham City University.