Editorial

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Journal of Initial Teacher Inquiry. This special issue has a focus on contemporary teaching and learning issues. This journal celebrates inquiry based research as conducted by Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students completing the intensive, one year Master of Teaching and Learning (MTchgLn) course at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand. The MTchgLn is a new initial teacher education qualification with a particular focus on inclusive and culturally responsive teaching and learning in support of Māori and diverse learners, including Pasifika youth, students for whom English is a second language, those from low-socioeconomic backgrounds and those who experience special learning needs (i.e. Ministry of Education defined 'priority').

E kore e taea e te whenu kotahi
ki te raranga i te whäriki
kia mōhio ūtau ki ā ūtau.
Mā te mahi tahi ō ngā whenu,
mā te mahi tahi ō ngā kairaranga,
ka oti tēnei whäriki.
I te otinga
me tītiro ūtau ki ngā mea pai ka puta mai.
Ā tana wā,
me tītiro hoki
ki ngā raranga i makere
nā te mea, he kōrero ano kei reira.

The tapestry of understanding cannot be woven
by one strand alone.
Only by the working together of strands,
and the working together of weavers,
will such a tapestry be completed.
With its completion,
let us look at the good that comes from it and,
in time we should also look at those stitches
which have been dropped,
because they also have a message.

This programme has an emphasis on professional inquiry for the development of action competent and critical pedagogues. In broad programme design and conceptual framing, this is achieved through the interweaving of the centralising constructs of ‘learning to practice’ principles (Timperley, 2012) and ‘central tasks’ of initial teacher education (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) that align with research-evidence on high-quality initial teacher education programme design (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

One key principle of the programme is that teaching is a complex, learned profession. Therefore, critical analysis and reflection on experiences of classroom learning leads ITE students to a systematic examination of their ‘puzzles of practice’. This inquiry approach to teaching and learning is research informed and ITE student learning is focused on the development of adaptive expertise (Davis & Fickel, 2014). As they consider their ‘puzzles of practice’, our beginning teachers need to be able to draw on, understand and critique research related to aspects of teaching, curriculum and assessment. They need to be able to integrate this developing professional knowledge into their inquiry approach in order to support their ongoing, complex decision-making. This development of adaptive expertise with ITE students is an important focus for our MTchgLn teacher education programme. However, in order for our ITE students to develop research-informed, culturally responsive teaching and learning practices, it is also important to promote teacher action competence which;

...includes, but is also more than, having a repertoire of effective pedagogical tools. It denotes having knowledge about learners, society and teaching (knowing about), combined with know-how and knowledge of how to act (knowledge in action), and the will to act to bring about educational change (values for action)... (Abbiss & Astall, 2014, p. 6-7)

Consistent with the ‘learning to practice principles’ (Timperley, 2012) that provide the foundation for the MTchgLn programme, a carefully constructed learning community, consisting of the teacher educators, mentor teachers, partner schools and the ITE students themselves, provides opportunity for a collaborative, supportive, authentic space for shared learning. Working within this collaborative space our MTchgLn students were required to conduct a critical literature review based on a contemporary issue in education that resonated with ‘puzzles of practice’ emerging from their developing contexts. The twenty three research articles resulting, relate to a mix of both primary and secondary school-based contexts and are organised under the following themes:

- Assessment and Accountability
- Teaching as Inquiry – Changing Pedagogies
- Professional Development and Teacher Relationships
- Family and Community Partnerships in Education

With topics being classroom related, we believe they will be of genuine interest for pre-service teachers, classroom teachers and teacher educators alike. Each article is concise, comprised of approximately 1,500 words and has undergone a robust peer review process in order to ensure high academic quality and rigour. An overview of each theme is provided below.

Assessment and Accountability

In considering student achievement, particularly for priority learners, Hannah Ewing explores the notion of how the influence of negative stereotypes of a particular group may result in increased anxiety and impaired cognitive ability in assessments. Chris Houghton analyses the gap in achievement in ākonga within New Zealand, particularly for Māori and Pasifika, and discusses the use of cultural frameworks to support formative assessment practice in order to engage learners. This leads to a review of some issues surrounding formative and summative assessment practices by Vanessa Price. Effective feedback is crucial to supporting ākonga to improve learning. Nicki McFadzien examines what effective feedback is and why reciprocity is so critical in supporting both learning and teaching. Nicole Mehr tens reviews standardised assessments, accountability and the implications for ākonga learning. In the final article of this section, Sasha Johnson takes an international perspective. She explores how standardised assessments are used internationally to compare and rank countries and explores what is measured and what is most useful in terms of predicting economic competitiveness.
Teaching as Inquiry – Changing Pedagogies

In the first of the reviews in this section, Genevieve Williamson critiques three key concepts related to self-regulated learning; metacognition, motivation and behaviour. She discusses the benefits for ākonga and implications for teachers. The next two articles focus on technology and its influence on pedagogy. Nicholas Shimasaki identifies some key barriers to the integration of technology in schools and Nathan Sinclair discusses how learning with technology should be guided and supported by pedagogy. The challenges associated with the complex nature of teaching and the process of becoming a teacher is revealed by Kim Griffin. She discusses the relationship between teaching as inquiry and the importance of developing dispositions for teaching. Corinna Wells, in her review considers the Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome (SOLO) taxonomy model in relation to assessment and pedagogy. Finally, Sione Areli reviews how indigenous epistemologies are incorporated into modern pedagogical practice.

Professional Development and Teacher Relationships

Ways of working within communities of practice, and the importance of supporting relationships within these communities, to facilitate āko

ngā learning are highlighted in the next series of reviews. Ethan Smith considers the importance of collegial relationships between kaiako to support professional development within learning communities. The breadth and nature of professional relationships required to support students with special educational needs is highlighted by Nicole Hook. The February 2011 earthquake provides a reminder of how important ākonga-kaiako relationships are in times of extreme stress; especially to a child’s healing and resilience. In her review, Alice Foote reviews research of disasters, including the Christchurch earthquakes, and discusses the role teachers’ play in supporting student recovery. Teachers also have a significant role in developing ākonga-kaiako relationships outside of the school context through extracurricular activities. Gareth Sutton identifies some affordances and constraints of such extracurricular engagement. Lucy Brownlee acknowledges the importance of parental involvement in supporting relationships with ākonga and whānau. She discusses why these relationships are important and how teachers can continue to encourage them. Finally, Veronica Noetzli explores how adopting a restorative approach to relationships in a school environment has a numerous benefits for students, staff and the wider community.

Family and Community Partnerships in Education

Olivia Proctor identifies the role of the teacher in supporting citizenship education and the importance of using controversial issues as a context for developing this aspect, although she cautions for the need to support teachers in this practice. The power relationships between parents and teachers can be supportive as well as destructive. Using the recent case of a Christchurch student, Erin Small reviews these power relationships and explores how they can support and promote student achievement. Aimee Gledhill continues with the theme of engaging parents and examines the literature around parental involvement with homework and some of the challenges this provides. Those barriers to parental involvement, particularly for minority and disabled parents, and their effectiveness on student achievement is discussed by Heather Humphrey-Taylor. Finally, Graeme Jones researches bullying and bullying behaviour in terms of the style of parenting and leaves us with some thought provoking questions.

Our MTchgLn programme whakataukī emphasises the value we place on our ITE students and their learning;

**Ahakoa he iti, he pouanui**

Although it is small, it is greenstone

We do hope the articles are of intrinsic interest to you, the reader. We believe they are a testament to what the MTchgLn graduates can achieve when asked to examine classroom practice through a teaching inquiry based lens.

Chris Astall, Murray Fastier and Letitia Fickel

Co-editors

School of Teacher Education
Te Rangai Ako me te Hauora
Te Whare Wananga o Waitaha
College of Education, Health & Human Development,
University of Canterbury

References


