Welcome to the third issue of the Journal of Initial Teacher Inquiry. The 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. Our MTchgLn programme whakatauki (proverb) emphasises the value we place on our ITE students and their learning;

Ahakoa he iti, he pounamu
Although it is small, it is greenstone

Our programme has an emphasis on professional inquiry with a specific focus on developing the skills of critical analysis and reflection on practice experiences to support ikonga (learner) achievement. It is common for beginning teachers to have queries concerning contemporary issues in education based on personal experiences. This allowed our MTchgLn students to explore their own puzzles of practice through a research informed approach (as opposed to a practice based approach) into exploring such issues. Therefore our ITE students need to learn the skills required to explore, understand and critique research as they develop an inquiry approach to support their learning. One outcome of our ITE students’ learning was a critical literature review based on a contemporary issue in education that resonated with puzzles of practice emerging from their developing contexts.

The themes for this issue were drawn from the Bolstad et al. (2012) report Supporting future-oriented learning and teaching – a New Zealand perspective and were:

• Personalising learning
• Equity, diversity, and inclusivity
• Rethinking learner and teacher roles
• Partnerships and relationships
• The role of new technologies

Our ITE students were asked to consider these emerging principles for 21st century education system arising from a vision of future-oriented learning and teaching and to consider what aspects resonated with their current experiences, what were their puzzles of practice, what were their developing interests that would lead them to inquire into their own practice. This journal is the result of those inquiries.

Ko te ahurei o te tamaiti arahia o tatou mahi
Let the uniqueness of the child guide our work

In the final article in this section, Gibson takes a more philosophical approach as he discusses and critiques personalised learning and the implications for implementing it in practice.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity

In her article, Harbott identifies that although New Zealand is an inclusive society, teaching practices vary widely with regards to educating for diversity. In this review she explores the challenges facing teachers as they attempt to respond to the complex student diversity of their classes. The second article has a specific focus on gender equity within the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Specifically, Huddleston explores the importance of developing, maintaining and retaining gender interest in STEM. In the third article within this section, Falconer has a particular interest in supporting Pasifika literacy education. In her literature review she discusses some of the key factors that influence Pasifika literacy outcomes and identifies two clear strategies for teachers that may improve literacy achievement. In the next article, Ford approaches the theme through an analysis of streaming in a secondary mathematics context and explores the influence of streaming on how students perceive their own capabilities (student self-concept) in mathematics. The final article, by Ladkin, also takes a student perspective on inclusivity and considers the role of student voice and power relations within a school and the implication for minority students.

Rethinking Learner and Teacher Roles

The first article within this theme by Robertson explores the idea of student voice and considers how students can gain more agency within a school setting and the implications for teaching practice. The second article, by Denton, considers citizenship education. In particular the role of the teacher, with respect to their beliefs, values and pedagogy is examined and the impact this may have on the teaching and learning of citizenship education for students. In her article, Page examines a specific pedagogical practice, cooperative learning, and considers some of the barriers and enablers to facilitate it in the classroom. The next article, by Spenner, looks specifically at growth mindset and discusses some examples of growth mindset interventions in the primary classroom as well as with parents. The potential for using this pedagogy to support learning and the potential challenges associated with it are explored. In her article, Hooker has a particular interest in student wellbeing. Her literature review explores those factors that contribute to student wellbeing in schools and discusses the connection to student achievement. She also identifies the importance of considering teacher wellbeing and how it may be a significant influence on student wellbeing and makes the connection to the importance of developing shared learning environments that promote wellbeing. The last article in this section, by Johns, continues the theme of wellbeing and in particular examines mental health and wellbeing in schools. She provides a review of current support systems, identifies those factors that may place students at risk, and discusses the paucity of research into adolescent mental health and wellbeing in New Zealand.

Partnerships and Relationships

The notion of connectedness is developed within this theme, drawing on connections between participants within schools, schools and outside organisations and schools and the wider community. In the first review, Hegarty explores how innovative...
learning environments (ILE) provide opportunities for students and teachers to engage in a new type of partnership. The use of specific organisations that have a disciplinary focus, such as science centres, to help provide a greater contextual connection for learning opportunities is discussed by Abernethy. With a focus on science outreach, Abernethy provides a range of examples where positive outcomes for learning have been reported. Munro takes a particular interest in home-school partnerships and explores how technology can foster such partnerships. She identifies the challenges of using digital technologies to support home-school relationships. In her review, Mackie explores the role of religion as a basis for a community-based and inclusive approach to education. In particular she explores the role of school leaders and faith-based schooling and its impact on the development of community relationships. The last article in this section, by Lawry, considers the relationship between teacher early into their career (pre-service and beginning teachers) and teacher mentors. The complexities of the mentoring process are explored and in particular the implications of mentoring on beginning teacher job satisfaction, job turnover, and student achievement are discussed.

The Role of New Technologies

Schools that are technology-rich learning environments have been shown to utilise technology to: enable and support infrastructure, provide opportunities to connect and inspire, enhance capability, and to support innovation (Bolstad et al., 2012). In this theme Heath presents a review that explores how technology can be used to support the nature of science in the classroom. In particular he discusses how technology can support student agency, access to new knowledge, opportunities to collaborate, and a contextual relevance to inquiry. Jackson continues the theme but explores it through mathematical discipline knowledge. His review explores a range of factors affecting the use of integration of information and communications technology (ICT) in the mathematics classroom. The role of ICT to support a teaching as inquiry approach is examined by Dobbertin-King. In the review he discusses a variety of strategies that are required to support teachers. Husband explores the use of e-tools for assessment and in particular focuses on the challenges associated with the transition to technology based assessment, the benefits and challenges. In the final article of this section, Findlay discusses the notion of digital access within learning environments and the role of digital literacy. He explores a number of innovative practices, specifically the role of gamification as an example of future-focused learning to support enhanced reading and writing skills in learners.

The articles selected for this journal reflect the high quality of our ITE graduates and provide an intrinsic value to those engaged in exploring practice through a teaching as inquiry approach. We value each and every article, and, for our ITE students as they begin their journey, we remind ourselves of the importance of each one of their contributions - ahakoa he iti, he pounamu.

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