

Critical and Reflective Practice in Education

Editorial:

Welcome to the third volume of *Critical Reflective Practice in Education*. The journal continues to move from strength to strength in attracting contributions nationally and internationally. Extensive change continues to surround the world of education in the UK, including higher education, academy status for schools and the diminishing responsibilities of local authorities.

Whilst these changes can present us with a state of uncertainty they also make for an exciting time for the University College Plymouth, St Mark & St John as it drives its international profile whilst at the same time establishing and cementing firm links with schools. The journal now falls within the brief of the *Centre for Professional and Educational Research*, which has, as its research lead, Dr. Sean MacBlain one of the Executive editors.

Volume three presents an interesting collection of articles in education ranging from social and cultural changes to the dynamics and complexities of initial teacher education and the value of adopting and sustaining a critically reflective approach towards teaching.

Paul Reitano and Nicole Green in *"Mapping expertise in social science teaching: the professional development of a beginning teacher"* report on a longitudinal study of a pre-service teacher, and how he moved from his 4th (and final year) year of teacher education studies in an urban university in Australia, to his first year of Social Science teaching in a secondary school. The study employed a concept mapping approach and adopted a think aloud protocol to determine the pre-service teacher's understandings over a twelve-month period. Initial findings indicate that he was well on his way to becoming an accomplished

teacher in the social sciences. The pre-service teacher acknowledged that a concept mapping exercise assisted him in reflecting on his knowledge structures and facilitated him in making explicit his implicit understandings of classroom teaching. The author presents a comprehensive argument promoting the effective use of concept mapping.

Reflect-Select-Defend: A Model for Student Teacher Reflection is a small scale study by Ken Gibson and Noel Purdy considering the significance of robust self-reflection for final year student teachers completing a Career Entry Profile (CEP). It is set against UK regional variations and examines one innovative model, which encourages student teachers to 'reflect' on their strengths and areas for development according to stated competences. In doing so, student teachers 'select' appropriate evidence to create a CEP portfolio, and then 'defend' their conclusions in discussion with university tutors and school head teachers. The findings highlight the value of the 'reflect'- 'select'- 'defend' model by generating much greater depth and quality of reflection, and recommends that such a model be adopted on a wider scale. This is a fascinating article and raises the unquestionable importance of reflection for student teachers and how this facilitates their future development. Equally, it emphasises the value Initial Teacher Education needs to place on promoting ownership of learning for student teachers.

In *"Newcomer pupils: facing up to the cultural and linguistic challenges"* Noel Purdy and James Ferguson present and explore the dilemmas for in-service school teachers on the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity of their pupils. Having set the international context, the research focuses on one particular region (Northern Ireland) which is experiencing unprecedented inward migration as it emerges from conflict into a period of relative stability and prosperity. The article makes specific

recommendations not just for Northern Ireland but also for an international audience, with a central proposal that all schools urgently receive additional funding for training and resources to meet the needs and seize the opportunities presented by newcomer pupils.

Lynne Grant and Sandra Hill's *"Social capital and its influences on pupil education: external connections matter"* is an ongoing research project that employs a social capital lens to explore the external educational influences on young people throughout their primary and secondary education. It explores the internal and external networks that pupils engage with, within the school environment and beyond. This article briefly provides an insight into the methodology employed, and provides some initial findings based on the pilot of pupil questionnaire and discussion responses. The findings raise questions about the recognition and recording by schools regarding pupil-external activities. This article is insightful and without doubt raises questions for further exploration.

Patricia Cunningham's article *"Moving the debate on partnership in Initial Teacher Education forward: compromise or innovation?"* explores the degree to which partnership models reflect 'real life' practice. It focuses on whether a three year B. Ed. (Hons.) Early Years degree programme, with qualified teacher status, at an English Higher Education Institution (HEI) has made significant inroads into the concept of partnership between schools and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Through researching what constitutes an effective partnership a comparison is made between the partnership 'in practice' and the three key models of partnership that have emerged and that have been developed by Furlong et al (1996 & 2000). The article concludes by recognising that the partnership in practice is unique and innovative and pushes the boundaries of the existing three

models of partnership. However, it also acknowledges that more research is needed to investigate whether the success of the partnership outweighs any doubts as to its sustainability. The author examines the complexities of three key partnership models and raises the importance of a collaborative approach between HEIs and schools in providing effective initial teacher education provision.

In her *Epistemological Orphans and Childlike Play with Spaghetti: Philosophical Conditions for Transformation*, Karin Murriss examines the assumptions made about relationships between adults and children and between teachers and students, and reconstructs the philosophical theories surrounding knowledge, knowing, living and being. Drawing on her experience in the field of philosophy for and with children, she appeals for teachers as interpreters to be more vulnerable to their texts as they move forward in dialogue, and more sensitive to their children and students as living beings/bodies with stories and experiences of their own which they can bring to, among other things, the Mad Hatter's Tea Party! In some ways this piece has common ground with the following article which is a re-evaluation of the kind of learning that takes place in HE institutions. The metaphor of spaghetti is used to describe a non-hierarchical view of knowledge which have ends that are also beginnings.

Sam Peach in her *"Understanding the Higher Education Curriculum in the 21st Century"* addresses the notion that the Higher Education curriculum in the twenty-first century is a highly contested arena where different epistemological constructs and paradigms are competing to shape and determine its form, content and character. This article provides critical insights and understanding of the contemporary curriculum in Higher Education.

The article is written from the perspective of a senior member of staff holding the position of Dean of Faculty in a University College of Higher Education and draws upon the findings of an ethnographic case study of curriculum undertaken within the author's own institution. It seeks to offer an interpretive analysis and overview of key catalysts of curriculum change. This is an extremely interesting article and one that recognises the challenges facing Higher Education.

Once more, *Critical and Reflective Practice in Education* offers a collection of critically reflective articles, which provide professional insights into schools and universities in the twenty-first century. The Editorial Board would like to extend their appreciation and thanks to all authors and reviewers for contributing to the third issue of *Critical and Reflective Practice in Education*.

Wendy Geens
Executive Editor