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Editorial

The 18th issue of the TEAN journal presents an excellent range of interesting and stimulating articles based on research and scholarly study which contribute to our continuing conversation about teacher education. The reviewers for TEAN are highly praised by the authors who appreciate their rigorous and supportive advice and TEAN is most grateful to them all for this. If you would like to be involved in the journal as a reviewer or have an idea for a paper for the journal, or indeed a special issue, please get in touch with alison.jackson@cumbria.ac.uk

Congratulations to all our authors for all the time and effort they put in to finalise their papers and give us plenty to advance our thinking about teacher education.

Rick Tynan and Robert Bryn Jones from Liverpool John Moores University begin our issue by considering how teacher educators use numerical grades when assessing teaching competencies. Their study looked at number grade assessment data from a large secondary initial teacher education programme across schools working in partnership with a higher education provider in the Northwest of England. They used statistical analysis to monitor consistency and look for correlations between assessment outcomes across teacher training partnerships and at different stages in training the data consistently demonstrated underlying patterns. Their findings suggested that, in their present format the use of number grades and categories when assessing teachers may be masking actual assessment processes, which may be more valid and reliable than the current practice.

Matthew Sossick from Roehampton University and Retired Headteachers David Gumbrell and Pat Allen looked at the resilience of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and how successful a coaching project designed to support and nurture NQTs was. Interviews with the NQTs highlighted areas of stress such as workload and pupil behaviour and, importantly, the coaching provided a 'safe' environment, removed as it was from school organisations. The result was that NQTs could better see the bigger picture and be encouraged to develop their practice. Despite the small scale nature of the research, the authors strongly recommend the form of coaching they describe as an important part of professional development and one which has the potential to support teacher resilience and thus retention.

Sioned Hughes and Geraint Davies from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David focus on student teachers' perceptions of childhood poverty in Wales and its implications for schools. The messages from their research have resonance well beyond Wales. They discovered that trainee teachers in Wales were aware of the problem of childhood poverty and displayed a mature understanding of the issues. The trainees described it as a state of material, educational and emotional deprivation which prevents children and young people from developing their potential as individuals and from developing into fully active members of society. They were therefore anxious that their training would develop their personal confidence in this area because they considered the school to be a place which can make a significant contribution.

Clare Lawrence from Bishop Grosseteste University discusses her research into trainee teachers' attitudes to autism and questions what effect previous exposure to autistic individuals would have. Results suggest that education about autism by neuro-typical lecturers, without input from autistic individuals, may not provide as effective education as if input were made by autistic individuals. The use of personal report by an autistic individual may serve to increase (conscious) familiarity for trainee teachers with autistic people, and to break down the barrier of 'otherness' which trainee teachers may perceive themselves to be experiencing. Similarly, access to a wider experience and richer examples of autism from family members and friends of autistic individuals may additionally impact positively on trainee teachers' perceptions of autistic pupil.

Lisa Fernandes from Newcastle College, Teaching Development Centre continues the discussion on how best to prepare student teachers with regard to autistic learners. She argues that Initial Teacher Education for students planning to teach in Further Education, which includes schools, colleges and training providers for learners aged 14+, should be revised to encourage ITE students to view their own approach to inclusion through the framework of American philosopher Nussbaum's Capability Approach (CA). She explains that the CA is a liberal, political philosophy which seeks to achieve justice, equality and democracy for all. It does not attempt to explain inequality but supports us to conceptualise these ideas. Her conclusion suggests that the CA is a concrete basis for ITE students to start exploring ethical issues around disability and inclusion.

Eleanor Power and Paul Waring-Thomas from Nottingham Trent University turn our attention to developing critical reflection in initial teaching trainees by using an arts-based approach. They felt that student teachers needed support with the critical reflection element of their units of learning. In their research project, they asked their trainees to share their understanding of the term 'critical reflection' and then provided a teaching session, using both flipped learning techniques and a 'Cut up and Collage' approach to support their developing understanding of the term. They report that findings revealed some improvement in critical thinking, with participants becoming more reflective about their personal and professional identities as teachers. The goal would be that trainees move into their first teaching post with critical reflection an embedded and natural part of their practice.

Alaster Scott Douglas from the University of Roehampton lays his focus on the personal rather than the technical aspects of teacher education. He reports on his study which interviewed pre-service teachers and then revisited them nine years later to ask about their careers thus far. Alaster uses concepts from Heidegger's philosophical enquiry into Being (readiness-to-hand and authenticity) to comment on the longitudinal data analysis. He suggests Heidegger's ideas as a way for pre-service teachers themselves to consider their own conceptualisations of knowing and becoming, so as to recognise and understand what it means to be a teacher. His recommendation is that, if teaching is more than subject delivery and measurable outcomes, then teacher education and professional development opportunities would benefit from a focus on personal aspiration and anticipatory moments of becoming.

Jo Griffiths from the University of Leicester presents her paper on the challenges of the cost of initial teacher education for the student teacher. Her research was based in English Universities, however she notes that the findings offer a universal message which has relevance for teacher educators beyond England. The respondents in her study reported significant financial difficulties during their studies and many believed that these impacted negatively on their health. Often students had to depend on loans, part-time jobs and family support. Findings go on to discuss added problems for disadvantaged students such as those on low income or from ethnic minorities. Jo suggests that the difficulties encountered have important implications for recruitment to teacher education courses and attracting a wide range of applicants to the profession.

Independent Researcher Mark A. Minott considers the increased contribution that Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) could make in the schools where they take up their first post. He does this by taking a multinational perspective in his research study, drawing on participants from Australia, Belize, Canada, Cayman Islands, China, Cyprus, England, Greece, Jamaica and the USA. He was curious as to what kind of contributions NQTs could make and suggests that their possible input is not fully used. His results suggest that the personal qualities that NQTs possess, the facts which they share and gain via experience and training, and the skills they bring to the school community are a rich source that the school can benefit from. He recommends that school leadership teams re-examine their views on the use of NQTs.

Our final paper comes from **Louise Hawxwell from Edge Hill University** who looked at primary student teachers' perceptions of outdoor learning to see if 'a potato peeler and a tarpaulin' would really suffice. She reminds us of the benefits of spending time outdoors and presents her research with primary education degree students at the start of their Initial Teacher Training. She discovered that there were varying views concerning outdoor learning, ranging from positive to apprehensive. She arranges her findings under themes which came out of the results of the research and presents suggestions for practice with regard to outdoor learning. Her conclusion is that outdoor learning experiences could be delivered as part of a teacher training degree programmes to foster enthusiasm and commitment which would then remain throughout a teaching career.

Alison Jackson

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