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## Teacher Education Advancement Network Journal

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### Editorial

Welcome to the 16<sup>th</sup> issue of the TEAN journal. This is something of a ‘bumper issue’ presenting twelve papers from colleagues on a range of most interesting and thought-provoking topics. It is hoped that you will use the inspirations you find here to inform your own practice and look to submitting your own work for the journal in the next edition – which is starting to build already. Once again thanks are due to the most diligent and thorough work of the TEAN reviewers who are so helpful in supporting the authors to publication.

We start the issue with a thought-provoking paper from **Ben Knight, University of the West of England**. Ben notes that the teaching profession in the UK has undergone various iterations of competency criteria, culminating in England with the current policy, the Teachers’ Standards (TS) (DfE, 2011). He focuses on the most rapid period in the evolution of competency-based approaches from 1997 to the present, analysing aspects of the political landscape which have precipitated this rise and picks out *i)* the political necessity for a reductionist view of teaching and learning and *ii)*, the centrality of the teacher. The paper concludes by imagining how, taking these themes into account, the policy could evolve to become more useful to both teachers and pupils.

Next we move on to a position paper from **Hazel Beadle, University of Chichester**. Hazel is looking at a topic in which we would claim to be all well versed; change. She sets out the merits of a ‘processual lens’ which acknowledges that any single change is part of a larger framework of activities and echoes the dynamism found in the school based context. The more usual structural lens, she argues, plays into the hands of those imposing change, where power and politics might well be exhibited through covert efforts to limit understanding, particularly of the ramifications of intended or required action. In her paper she identifies the importance of ‘sharing understanding’ which could lead to a better informed school teaching community.

**Shirley Hewitt, Sarah Buxton and Ani Thomas from the University of Derby** invite us to consider their study in which student teachers were invited to attend Dramatherapy workshops to help support the development of their self-efficacy and emotional resilience. They hoped to improve outcomes and student retention on teacher training programmes and responses were indeed positive. The student teachers indicated that it had enabled them to be more effective in self-evaluation and reflection, feeling less isolated and having more self-awareness. Shirley, Sarah and Ani intend to do more work on this and collate a wider database to demonstrate the effectiveness of this type of intervention in supporting a new way of learning for trainee teachers.

One unique feature of the next article is that is written by four students in collaboration with their academic advisor. **Nicoleta Gaciu from Oxford Brookes University with Luke Dalzell, Jonathan Davis, Allyson Diamond and Sian Howard** give an insight into trainee teachers’ different experiences and the approaches they used to expand and acquire Physics and Mathematics subject knowledge, alongside other forms of knowledge. The students’ reflections show how their subject knowledge had been synthesised from a range of previous experiences. They then go on to show how their

subject knowledge subsequently developed in practice throughout the PGCE course, and how they developed their subject knowledge to the required level to begin their teaching careers in a confident manner.

**Lorraine Thomas from Newman University** asks us to look at the lessons that can be learned from the government-prescribed Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) in England. She presents a multiple case study from interviews with recently qualified teachers who had started the MTL as newly qualified teachers; recently qualified teachers who chose not to undertake the MTL; and Deans of Education. Despite the MTL itself having several flaws, there were also merits and Lorraine suggests that a Masters level profession is a highly commendable aim as it provides teachers with a professional language and confidence with which to articulate their practice. She fears that the absence of national policy around teacher professional development in England, however, makes for an incoherent and chaotic scene.

Our next paper is co-authored by **Amanda French from Birmingham City University and Dinah Hobbs from Kings Heath Primary School, Birmingham**. They report on a 'productive partnership' between a university and a primary school working together to actively involve children as researchers in child-led research in a variety of school-based research initiatives. The project gave the children the opportunity to design and lead on the evaluation of a major, externally funded exhibition hosted by the school. This experience had a beneficial effect on the pupils who enhanced their confidence and communication skills as well as learning about research processes and, importantly, consolidated a new, research-based relationship between the school and a local university.

**Emma Clarke from Bishop Grosseteste University and John Visser from the University of Northampton** consider the role of teaching assistants (TAs) in managing behaviour and how TAs cultivate their own learning in general. They explore how TAs are now developing as 'paraprofessionals' with a wider pedagogical role than in the past. The lack of clarity over teacher expectations and an uncertain definition of the TA role place tension on TAs' desire to 'help and support' teachers without 'undermining' them. Emma and John suggest that whole-school discussion is required to agree a workable context-specific definition of the TA role which is detailed enough to ensure all members of staff understand what could be involved.

**Jayne Woodbury from the University of the West of England** focuses on stakeholders' views concerning two teacher training routes for graduates in England; the Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) and School Direct (SD). She reports on a small case study which sought to compare and contrast these routes in the light of government policy initiatives and reforms towards increasingly school-led ITT. Findings suggest that both routes offer benefits to both trainee and provider and both offer the opportunity to spend an extended time in placement schools. However, she warns that there is a danger that the underlying pedagogical understanding of teaching and learning could be lost if the push towards schools led ITT is maintained and HEIs continue to withdraw from teacher education.

**Rick Tynan and Andrea Mallaburn from Liverpool John Moores University** pose an interesting question for us: Consistency counts – or does it? They are talking about the consistency of assessment outcomes and practice, and analysed assessment data from trainees to try to discover the answer. Their findings to date seem positive in that using and comparing several statistical approaches, all the methods indicated consistency of outcomes across the programmes for the final summative assessment. However, the second and qualitative phase of the study is ongoing and uses Q-Analysis to illuminate these initial findings by seeking to identify clusters of subjectivity amongst

mentors and tutors when prioritising statements about assessment. We look forward to the next instalment.

**Victoria Wright, Theresa Loughlin and Dr.Val Hall from the University of Wolverhampton** ask us to consider the developing identity of student teachers. Their research focused on observation and feedback processes, including action planning as an integral element linked to the post-compulsory sector professional standards (Education and Training Foundation 2014), as they occurred on a PGCE in PCE programme. They conclude that the research reiterates the need to continue to challenge and explore the notion of 'identity' and to regularly share and learn from each other's situated learning experiences. They suggest that introducing students to the concept of ecological learning systems could provide stimulus for closer exploration of the interactions and relationships within their placement settings and the impact on their identification of themselves as teachers.

**Debbie Duncalf, Di Lloyd, Andrea Pratt and Peter Horsfall from Liverpool John Moores University** discuss teacher perspectives of cultivating learning through practitioner enquiry to transform practice. Their paper reports on the first year of an innovative Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) in Advanced Education Practice. The programme is underpinned by three strands of practice based learning which they explore. They outline a new approach to cultivating learning, both for teachers and educational practitioners through a collaborative learning model with a Higher Education Institution and go on to consider transformative impact on practice. Throughout the report it is evident that school leaders were keen to enhance the performance of staff by supporting them in Masters level study to enhance professional practice and impact on learning.

Finally, we present an interesting discussion paper from **Stuart Hanscomb and Carlo Rinaldi from the University of Glasgow**. They discuss 'extended professionalism', a central feature of the 2010 Donaldson Review of Teacher Education in Scotland. They analyse the role of concurrent courses (i.e. university courses taken by education students outside of core education subjects) in the development of this extended professionalism. They look at the 'graduate attributes' agenda adopted by many universities, and outline two dimensions and three possible models of the relationship between concurrent courses and the purposes of teacher education. The conclusion they reach is that progress with research into the nature, purpose and effectiveness of concurrent teaching must involve close engagement with the degree organisers and lecturers themselves, and indeed with the students.

***Alison Jackson December 2016***