

Editorial

Val Mulholland

University of Regina

One of the obvious benefits of having a journal with an expansive focus is the variety of articles attracted for submission. As Acting-Editor-in-Chief for the past year, I have thoroughly enjoyed reading, reflecting, and thinking about the findings and ideas that creative scholars generate in their research. This issue of *in education* is emblematic of the range of ideas possible when the sole limit on content and perspective is set by human curiosity about education. In the 1980s when I was an undergraduate studying Education, I recall inklings of the themes present in this Spring Issue. The notion of the teacher as facilitator, of reflection as key to professional identity, and of the role of teacher in a civil society were present then, and are alive in this new research. Perhaps what we need to cultivate as teachers and researchers is the virtue of the long game, of the necessity of patience.

Ken Avery, Carolyn Huggan, and Jane P. Preston's article "The Flipped Classroom: High School Student Engagement Through 21st Century Learning," brings student perspectives to the experience of flipped pedagogy. Being young is not a guarantee of being fearless, open, or even interested in what the teacher has on offer, bells and whistles notwithstanding. The authors make it clear that they support the concept, but are not reluctant to share some of the obstacles in implementing this pedagogy. Conscious of the critics of the method, they write:

In response, we endorse flipped learning, but we caution teachers that if they want to promote enhanced student learning via the flipped classroom, they need to do more than just move from physically giving a traditional lecture in front of the class to providing that same lecture in recorded format.

Technology is important in the flipped approach, but it is evident that teachers' embrace of thinking and acting differently is as vital to successful implementation as any other factor. I am reminded of the number of dusty white boards that I have seen in obscure corners of schools visited over the past 10 years to have their conclusions resonate. Loading up classrooms with advanced technology will not a flip a school; a disposition for change must accompany the shift.

Similarly, in this reader's view, Karen Ragoonaden, Lisa Morajelo, and Lisa Kennedy's article "Critical friendship and Inter-Faculty Collaborative Inquiry: Teacher Education and Nursing Education" emphasizes the importance of reflection, trust, confidence, and caring in building a community of inquiry. If I were to identify a contemporary buzzword in recent years, inquiry might be at the top of the list. This article makes the case for the value of inquiry by linking that concept to the critical element of relationship. The authors of this action research project recognize the human qualities that make the approach work:

Campus-wide reflective communities of practice, situated into inquiry-based models, sustained with contributions from interdisciplinary colleagues, can provide spaces where pedagogical practices can be carefully planned, continuously revised, and where curriculum can be re-negotiated according to the plurality of contemporary society.

Here again, I am reminded of key concepts from my early education as a teacher such as inter-disciplinarity, recursive reflection as pedagogical practice, but renewed in this 21st century research.

In the 21st century, I would wager that every North American teacher has heard about the success of Finland in Education that regularly places students at the top of international standardized tests. Educators, administrators, and researchers across the spectrum of political perspectives, have summoned their understanding of what Finland is doing right. Paul Orlowski's article, "Teaching for Civil Society in Finland: A Canadian Perspective on Finnish Educators' Reflections," takes up the beliefs so many in education hold about the apparent success of the Finnish model through critical conversations with teachers who have enacted the "Finnish miracle." The heart of the article is "to explore the role of the teacher and the public school system in support of the commons, in strengthening civil society, and in fostering social cohesion." To many, it would appear that the development of the Finnish model has fulfilled the lofty purpose of the research question, and also realized the high scores coveted by so many nation states. In an engaging way, Orlowski scrapes away some of the veneer of optimistic belief, with the words of the teachers actually living the Finnish policies, and reveals some of the cracks in the narrative. He links his findings to the Canadian context, writing:

For Canadians, this could mean promoting the commons through pedagogy around progressive taxation and cooperation. For Finns, using anti-racist pedagogy to take on regressive views about immigration in the home would strengthen civil society. Both insights challenge neoliberal and right wing social views, and are therefore worthy of consideration and perhaps implementation in educational policy.

The articles shows, as we might have predicted, that no system is perfect, and that the imperfect Canadian system has something to offer the world, too.

Nevertheless, however lofty the goals of public education, how worthwhile the role of teacher may be to society, concern exists about the numbers of new teachers who leave the profession. In "Attrition, Retention, and Development of Early Career Teachers: Pan-Canadian Narratives," Benjamin Kutsyuruba, Keith Walker, Maha Al Makhamreh, and Rebecca Stroud Stasel share the results of their study of what causes teachers to leave. As with other articles in this issue, reflection is cited as being important to professional development, as is mentoring, and notably, caring. Individual personal and professional aspirations are also recognized as important to longevity in the profession. The responses to their questionnaires suggest a lack of meaningful support, effective induction, and a network of collegial relationships as obstacles for those entering teaching. [Spoiler alert – the last line of the paper is a big finish.] To conclude, they write, "When teachers who have a rich history of experiences and reflections narrate what they have needed along the way, we are in a much stronger position to support them and their new teacher colleagues in their most critical early years of teaching."

In North America, we are currently living in a political climate of uncertainty, bordering on chaos. I'm invoking the word *border* in a literal sense. On hopeful days, I rely on my experience as a teacher to believe that this, too, will pass. What I hope for most is that teachers take up the implicit challenge of being full-participants in a civil society, by educating students who can sort out fake narratives from the true; use technology for good not ill; and develop the critical acuity to choose a good path forward. Teachers have a role to play in building the world.

As in the articles in this issue, much depends on communication, trust, and deep understanding to make any system work – whether technological, institutional, or broadly political – and that’s true everywhere, including in *in education*. Thank you to Dr. Patrick Lewis, Editor-in-Chief, and Shuana Niessen, Managing Editor, for entrusting me with an expanded role in the journal this past year, and for teaching me the technical and ethical challenges of publishing a journal, and for having the patience how to deal with them, in a good way.