

# Teachers and Curriculum



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## About the Journal

Teachers and Curriculum is an online peer-reviewed publication supported by Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research (WMIER), Faculty of Education, The University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. It is directed towards a professional audience and focuses on contemporary issues and research relating to curriculum pedagogy and assessment.

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## Notes for Contributors

Teachers and Curriculum welcomes

- innovative practice papers with a maximum of 3,500 words, plus an abstract or professional summary of 150 words, and up to five keywords;
- research informed papers with a maximum of 3,500 words, plus an abstract or professional summary of 150 words, and up to five keywords;
- thinkpieces with a maximum of 1500 words; and
- book or resource reviews with a maximum of 1000 words.

## Focus

Teachers and Curriculum provides an avenue for the publication of papers that

- raise important issues to do with the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment;
- reports on research in the areas of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment;
- provides examples of innovative curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practice; and
- review books and other resources that have a curriculum, pedagogy and assessment focus.

### **Submitting articles for publication**

Please consult with colleagues prior to submission so that papers are well presented. Articles can be submitted online at <http://tandc.ac.nz/>

### **Layout and number of copies**

All submissions must be submitted online as word documents. Text should be one and a half spaced on one side of A4 paper with 20mm margins on all edges. Font = Times New Roman, 11 point for all text and all headings must be clearly defined. Only the first page of the article should bear the title, the name(s) of the author(s) and the address to which reviews should be sent. In order to enable 'blind' refereeing, please do not include author(s) names on running heads. All illustrations, figures, and tables are placed within the text at the appropriate points, rather than at the end.

### **Foot/End Notes**

These should be **avoided where possible**; the journal preference is for footnotes rather than endnotes.

### **Referencing**

References must be useful, targeted and appropriate. The Editorial preference is APA style; see *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (Sixth Edition). Please check all citations in the article are included in your references list, if in reference list they are cited in document, and formatted in the correct APA style. All doi numbers **must** be added to all references where required. Refer: <http://www.crossref.org/>

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### **Acknowledgement of Reviewers**

Thank you to the reviewers for their contribution to the process and quality of this issue. Many thanks to those who also helped with a review but the paper did not make it to this issue. Papers in this issue were reviewed by the following people (in alphabetical order):

Judy Bailey, Jennifer Charteris, Bronwen Cowie Kerry Earl, Richard Edwards, Jenny Ferrier-Kerr, Linda Hogg, Yvonne Kuys, Michele Morrison, Darren Powell, Merilyn Taylor, Bill Ussher, Cheri Waititi, Sandra Williamson-Leadley

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## FOUR STRINGS TO THIS BOW: THE PAPERS IN THIS ISSUE

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and

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Welcome to this issue of *Teachers and Curriculum*. A range of contemporary topics is presented from both national and international authors. They share their thinking and research in several different areas. Each paper provides practitioners, leaders and educators with an opportunity to consider teaching and curriculum from another's perspective. We may not agree with all thinking and conclusions but the reading should open up discussion spaces, whether with the author/s or locally with your professional colleagues, and hopefully prompt further reading and inquiry. The papers in this issue are presented to you in four themes: digital technologies; reflections on concepts and vocabulary; responsive pedagogy and/or curriculum; and innovative learning environments.

### Digital technologies

Stuart Armistead is passionate about the value of digital technologies in classrooms and schools. His article shares his investigation into the processes and anticipated outcomes of teachers and school leaders developing a vision for their school where beliefs and values are the primary concern. However, he highlights the inclusion of digital technologies as potentially positive in the tasks of encouraging children to think (creatively and critically), collaborate and solve problems. A shared vision for the learners in his schools has been the starting point for utilising digital technologies in learning.

Peter Diglin's paper is a nice illustration of Frances and Padma's later thinkpiece. His project involving a group of struggling literacy students in a scripted digital video programme would sit neatly in an ILE. There were benefits for students with more positive self perceptions of their literacy ability and general confidence, observable fun in learning and celebrative connections with parents. Peter and Fernando Rodríguez-Valls could have a conversation about how great it is to have a part in children feeling so motivated by learning in school. Perhaps the most lasting learning for children in these stories will be about identity and community.

### Reflections on concepts and vocabulary

In presenting his opinion on thinking, Andy Begg reflects on the vocabulary used in our workplaces and writing. He starts with the concept of thinking, which he subdivides into nine forms including contemplative and cultural *thinking*, then rolls on to the concepts of research and inquiry. Based on his experiences, Andy suggests that whether we use the term reflection, thinking, inquiry or research, learning is based on the teacher as asker of appropriate questions. He challenges us to discuss this further with him or others.

Robert Rinehart's paper advocates teachers, particularly those new to classroom teaching, take back power in *goal setting*. He presents one way of thinking about goal setting and sees setting our own goals as one way of resisting the dehumanising effects of the measurement and surveillance of an audit culture. We can pay more attention to what is meant when people use words and phrases like goal setting. Even when specific groups may capture the use of certain terms we can champion the connotations that make sense to us. (Remember the discussion over the phrase 'lifelong learning', see Coffield, 1999).

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Kerry Earl suggests that requiring learners (of whatever age, at any level) to read for understanding based on a list of ‘comprehension’ questions is limiting. While this may be one deliberate strategy used by teachers, she proposes, as an alternative, that we ask our learners to utilise a range of lenses in reading for understanding.

### **Responsive pedagogies and/or curriculum**

Fernando Rodríguez-Valls’ USA based article is about finding ways to connect and involve immigrant children in our classes; ways that help students travel their personal and collective journeys. This challenge is very relevant in a globalised (and it seems increasingly hard hearted) world where many families are pulled or pushed to emigrate. It is also about the way we might position the ‘other’, identify insiders and outsiders, and define ourselves by difference. This article presents a strong voice for what we can learn from other people’s stories and through writing and reading, more closely examining our own. Fernando had the opportunity to reflect on and examine his own story when he enrolled in further study.

As people, we all like to be valued for who we are and what we have to offer. While we may enjoy and benefit from learning the stories of others, it is our own stories and ways of doing that are critical to our self-efficacy. Linda Hogg presents a small case study of high school teachers who helped to improve the school experience and learning for students whose funds of knowledge were not the same as that of the teacher and most of their classmates. New Zealand is a diverse nation and becoming increasingly more so. The impact of this is felt in our classrooms and acknowledging that who we are impacts our relationships with others (including teachers) is critical to the growth of our students and as a nation.

Stephanie Dix and Mickey Bam tell us of a professional development project fostering active listening and peer feedback (they use the term *peer response*) with 6-7-year-old writers. The lesson information gives a useful picture of what happened and the kinds of conversations that were had. These young students, as audience members and writers, listened for details, compared an object with what had been written about it, and added additional details to their descriptions based on peer suggestions. We hope this publication—the sharing and dissemination of a story of practice resulting from a Teacher-led Innovation Funded project—might encourage the submission of more manuscripts as others progress and conclude such projects.

One note running through this issue is consideration of others’ perspectives when reading for understanding. In her article, Elizabeth Reinsfield considers how the perspective of some technology teachers in two secondary schools has been influenced by previous experiences and perceptions. She suggests that curriculum intentions are clearly mediated by individual teachers in their interpretation, understanding and decision-making around classroom programmes of learning. Teaching in a rapidly developing technological world has certainly presented many challenges for teachers and these technology teachers certainly indicate they have felt the pressure of this change.

### **Innovative Learning environments**

The key point in the piece by Frances Edwards and Padma Krishnan is how they see broader potential from what has become for many schools ‘the way forward’ or ‘the next step’—Innovative Learning Environments (ILE). In New Zealand ILEs<sup>i</sup> have been taken up as the/an answer for current and more long standing educational challenges; perhaps even the missing ingredient in an arsenal of digital solutions. Teachers can see how great ILE will be for arts-based and arts curriculum and how these ways may enhance learning for one group of students. This thinkpiece can also reopen discussion of potentially multiple pathways forward and the manner in which schools and teachers respond to calls for change.

Barb Whyte, Nik House and Nikki Keys’s report on the initial stages of their Innovative Learning Environment project at Welcome Bay School is very timely research in the New Zealand education context. Currently ILEs are a popular move so information regarding the enablers and barriers experienced in this school as they ventured towards greater collaboration in new classroom spaces

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<sup>i</sup> See <http://mle.education.govt.nz/>

will be valuable to other school leaders. Discussion about teachers' changing perspectives and connectedness highlights the benefits of a whole school collaboration that is open, transparent and fully supported and resourced by the leadership team.

Walking the line between scientific methods and qualitative methods is a challenge for those who study science education. Questions of justification and objectivity tend to be stronger in seeking 'the truth' over fidelity and verisimilitude of qualitative methods. Carrie Swanson's piece walks this line effectively in considering how to 'discover' and reshape children's working theories about the nature of science and their understanding of what it means to be a scientist. It is interesting to consider how we make sense as individuals of terms we use frequently, particularly those terms we use as members of groups.

This issue concludes with a Book Review by the University of Waikato librarian Alistair Lamb. Alistair highlights open access to an edited book out of Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research that considers the concept of being 'digitally smart' by a range of authors and settings for teaching and learning.