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Editors' work and an introduction to articles in this issue

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## Editors' work and an introduction to articles in this issue

### **Kerry Earl Rinehart**

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The following remarks generally apply to academic journal editorships and more specifically to my experiences as the general editor of *Teachers and Curriculum* and the *Waikato Journal of Education* (*WJE*), which is a peer-reviewed journal, fully online and free, supported by the Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research (WMIER). *WJE* is indexed in Scopus.

Since I am stepping down as general editor for the *Waikato Journal of Education*, I have again, been pondering just what it is we editors do, why it is an important part of the process of dissemination of scholarship to an informed audience, and what it means to contribute to the ongoing conversation that is scholarly journal publishing. Much of my time as a *WJE* editor since 2020 has been taken up with two major practical activities in response to manuscript submissions. These are making the hard early decision(s) of whether to move the submitted piece on to peer review, and, if it has been moved on, soliciting unpaid, hard-working experts in the field to provide a review of said manuscript. There are, of course, many other tasks of editors, such as planning for special issues, soliciting articles from key figures for thematic issues, and the daily processing of the hundreds of manuscripts we receive each year.

### **Deciding if the article should be sent to review**

For academic journals, most, if not all, manuscripts are screened by an editor(s) who decides whether to send it for peer review. Only after clearing the initial screening is an invitation sent to one or more peer reviewers to review the manuscript.

Manuscripts can be declined at this stage for a variety of reasons, but it is important to remember acceptance to review doesn't only depend on the quality and relevance of the manuscript. At times the number of submissions to *WJE* mean more submissions, by necessity, may be declined. Editors also consider a journal's aims and recent publishing history (e.g., topical areas, methodological angles, regional exemplars) when considering each manuscript. It is also sometimes nice to attempt to generate conversations on certain topics or concerns across hot topic issues.



## What happens in this editor's screening process?

Every editor, of course, performs their tasks differently, believes their process is best—and that may be true, at least for them. But during screening, most editors, implicitly or explicitly, rely on a series of questions to "triage" manuscripts. I look at the manuscripts' abstracts and keywords to help me focus decisions on what is declined or conditionally accepted at this point. Next, I pay attention to transparency of methods, ethical processes, nature of the evidence and analysis; this is followed by a close reading of the penultimate and final paragraph(s) for clarity on the contribution and "takeaway" messages, especially as they are targeted towards our readership.

Does the manuscript fit the journal's scope and aims and will it be of potential interest for *WJE* New Zealand and international readers?

Does the manuscript follow journal conventions in terms of length and formatting in line with *WJE* instructions for authors? Sometimes mistakes in these prescriptions indicate that authors are neither familiar with our needs or are simply recycling their material: it is the job of authors to target their submissions to the dictates of specific journals, not simply to rely on the work of copy editors to make the changes in formatting and reference styles needed.

Is the writing consistently good enough to make it worth reviewing?

Other questions/variations I may use:

- Does the author successfully argue the worth/value of the research?
- Has the research been conducted ethically?
- Is the evidence robust and credible?
- Is the contribution of the study clear?
- Are there potentially useful "takeaway" messages for *WJE* New Zealand and international readers?
- Is this a manuscript that will bring new insights or perspectives, provide innovative ways of thinking, or, in some way, create fresh understandings for readers?

Many manuscripts submitted to *WJE* receive an editor's initial review and some authors can be sent editorial feedback to begin with. This happens when the topic is of potential interest to readers but there are weaknesses to be addressed before an invitation can be sent out asking for reviewers' time and effort.

*WJE* rejects approximately 50% of submissions during this initial screening.

## What can you do as an author to get past editorial review?

- Submit a) a full copy, b) a reviewer-ready blind copy, and c) a cover letter, including all contact information—all to the *WJE* website (<https://wje.org.nz/index.php/>).
- Remember, editors are purposeful readers. Give attention to your title, abstract, and keywords. Make clear your research methods and ethical conduct, and the research and practitioner landscape (context, field, discipline).
- Remember to follow author instructions (manuscript length, format, type of research, style of article etc).
- Be sure of fit with the journal readership as your intended audience. What groups/*WJE* readership will care about your concerns? Ensure the "so what?" messages are relevant to the journal audience. Read past *WJE* publications to better align your work with typical *WJE* articles.
- Finally, double check the writing quality, including spelling, punctuation, usage, and APA 6th Ed. Style (use your networks for assistance with improving quality of your writing).

## Selecting potential reviewers to invite to review

Soliciting potential reviewers to invite to review each manuscript is my second major task. Knowing that thoughtful and helpful critical reviews are quite time-consuming, and that reviewers conduct reviews as a professional responsibility, sans payment, we do our best to respect and value our reviewers' time. Reviewer availability and willingness to complete a review in a timely manner is a major factor in the timeframes around completion of the review stage. If, for one reason or another, reviews are late or seemingly harsh—thus not encouraging to authors—then mitigating some of these can become a part of the job as well.

*WJE* does recognise, and very much appreciate, that we have very caring and capable reviewers who generally provide comprehensive guidance to authors. Our reviewers help *WJE* to support new and emerging scholars to join the ongoing conversations in their research fields and provide more experienced authors with targeted feedback to improve their manuscripts.

## Reviewing and beyond

Our review process is a double-blind system—that is, the names of reviewers and authors are not revealed to each other. Once the review process is complete, I consider all the feedback from peer reviewers and make an informed decision: to accept, to ask for revisions (revise and resubmit), or to reject the manuscript. *WJE* rejects approximately 10% of submissions on advice from our reviewers after reviews are in.

If you are asked to revise, please submit an accompanying document explaining how you have addressed reviewers' comments along with your revision, as this can help expedite acceptance of your manuscript. Once we have manuscripts that have completed the review process to our collective satisfaction and are accepted, they are sent to copyediting to prepare for publishing. Some manuscripts take more than two years to progress through all the stages.

## Content of issues

Another task as editor is to make decisions about the content of issues. *WJE* typically publishes two issues per year. Sometimes one of these is a special issue with guest editors.

When crafting a table of contents for *WJE*, I ask myself as the editor of the journal and general issues, where might articles best be placed in the issue? That is, what order might generate a "conversation" with the reader? Which may resonate with other pieces in the specific journal issue?

I can group articles reporting on research in different sectors together or use field/subject groupings to allow articles to be in conversation with each other. I could also order these items alphabetically according to the first author's family name. Along with conventions of this journal, and education journals generally, there is editorial privilege at play.

Being an editor is a privilege, a privilege that depends heavily on others: authors, reviewers, and readers. I have greatly valued my opportunity to serve as editor for the *WJE*. Thank you all for your contributions, feedback, and ongoing interest!

## Articles in this issue

Literature reviews are a useful place to start when scoping a new research project, especially for novice researchers. For experienced researchers, a literature review is a good way of keeping up to date with trends in topics, concepts and ideas, and the kinds of research being undertaken in the field. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education is a regular topic of research reported in *WJE* and the review by Ahmad Suryadi, Endang Purwaningsih, Lia Yuliati and Supriyono Koes

Handayanto titled “STEM Teacher Professional Development in Pre-service Teacher Education: A Literature Review” in this issue provides readers with an overview of international scope, a detailed presentation giving transparency to the systematic hard work behind this article. Of interest to STEM teachers, STEM teacher educators and pre-service teacher education, these authors conclude with a discussion on the seven most frequently used elements in teacher professional development in STEM.

The second article in this issue is also addressing concerns of pre-service teacher education, this time in New Zealand. Karen Finn’s article asks an important and timely question, “How do pre-service teachers apply culturally-responsive critical pedagogy in the classroom?” Using the critical social sciences approach described, she investigated how two pre-service teachers from one Aotearoa-New Zealand initial teacher education provider engaged in culturally responsive critical pedagogy during professional practice placement through a small interview study. Evidence was analysed according to five themes found in literature: reflecting on self and identity by the pre-service teacher, centring *ākonga* (student), uplifting culture; developing critical consciousness, and improving academic outcomes for *ākonga* of non-dominant cultures (p. 6 in this issue). The literature alone reviewed and used in this article will be a useful resource for other teacher educators, teachers, and school leaders.

Remaining with New Zealand as the research context but shifting to the early childhood sector, the third article by Monica Cameron, Karyn Aspden, Penny Smith and Tara McLaughlin is titled “‘The Curriculum Just Flows’—An Examination of Teachers’ Understandings and Implementation of Te Whāriki pre-2017”. In order to change the future, John Dewey proposed we need to understand how we got to where we are, the past and the direction we are heading and then we can take action in the present to alter the path we are on. The authors provide some history in the principles and aims of the 1996 version of Te Whāriki and describe the social-political context of early childhood education in New Zealand that led to the revision of curriculum in 2017. The authors used a case study approach to their research and this article reports on interview evidence from six leaders and six teachers from different early childhood education settings providing rich insights into early childhood education in New Zealand and teacher curriculum understandings and practices.

In Nigel Calder and Carol Murphy’s contribution to an ongoing conversation about the use of mobile technologies (MT) in education, titled “A Socio-Technological Assemblage When Teaching with Mobile Technology Apps”, they explore what is meant by affordances, the use of digital technology in education as social, and notions of the collective, bricolage, and assemblage as a way of making sense of the potential for students to share, negotiate, and create new knowledge. Presenting teachers’ and students’ views on learning experiences use of tablets and apps in primary school mathematics programmes, these authors argue that the use of MT “evoke[s] collaborative aspects, including the potential to stimulate the contestation and validation of ideas and give[s] opportunity for students to move between concrete and virtual manipulatives” (p. 69, in this issue).

As an editor as well as a teacher, I believe that we learn from encountering different perspectives and a variety of new knowledge from different educational contexts and systems. Education systems vary across nations as do educational experiences of students, educators, school leaders, and others in those systems. Massey (2005) wrote that under market globalisation those countries not participating fully in the market economy are talked of as “being in the past” rather than as representing alternatives to the dominant. Applying Massey’s notion to technological developments, countries with limited technological access, devices, and Internet are not seen, and respected, as being on different paths but are viewed as “being behind” on the one and only conceivable path. Arguably, technological determinism, like neoliberalism, has become a single storyline, inevitable, “common sense” approach to all aspects of education in many countries across the globe (Selwyn, 2022; Shore & Wright, 2015). Learning about experiences of education in different contexts provides a useful reminder that we are not all on the one path, there are alternatives.

Experiences of teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic and government response is the setting for Tagataese Tupu Tuia and Epenesa Esera’s article titled “(Student) Teacher Views: Impact of Technology on Teaching and Learning During Covid-19 in Samoa”. Their research used a Samoan

qualitative research methodology of talanoa and nofo conducting conversations with 10 in-service teachers who were studying at university to upgrade their qualifications. Although there were challenges for all concerned, it is evident in this article that established cultural practices of working in community helped teachers, parents, and students adapt as best they could to their new circumstances. These authors also point to the need for education authorities to prepare situated responses for eventualities that may be anticipated based on learning from other nations' experiences and their understanding of their own country and peoples.

"A Systematic Review of Empirical Studies on Computer-Assisted Language Learning" by Esin Saylan, Mehmet Kokoç and Zeynep Tatlı, examines the current trends and main findings of selected empirical computer-assisted foreign language learning studies published between 2000 and 2020 with the aim of providing a guide for practitioners who design computer-assisted language learning activities. The systematic review method was conducted based on Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) (see article in this issue). Information about the 36 studies reviewed includes technologies used, educational context, variables, underlying theories, participants, target languages, study time/duration/countries, skills/factors analysed, data collection, and analysis strategies in order to analyse and report on trends.

Our second article in this issue on language learning is titled "Approaches to Teaching and Learning a Second Language Online". Authors Te Hurinui Renata Karaka-Clarke, Angus Macfarlane and Jo Fletcher present research on how technology can support the learning of te reo Māori in New Zealand. Analysis of interviews evidence from teachers and students is presented based on a socio-cognitive approach to language teaching and learning. Cultural concepts and practices, such as *taha hinengaro* (mental health), *ako* (to both teach and learn) and *whanaungatanga* (kinship), are explored along with digital learning aspects such as asynchronous communication. On the basis of this study, the authors advocate for a "ritual of encounter" practice in order for Māori students to feel connected in relationship to their teacher, the community of learners, and the principles and ideas they are learning.

Not all educational settings in New Zealand have a strong Pacific culture; however, all institutions have a regulatory responsibility to ensure students from Pacific countries have the academic and social support they need to achieve their goals, and this is reflected in their strategic plans. Ilaisaane Foli Fakapulia, Latika Samalia and Erik Wibowoin, in their article titled "Social Factors Are Associated with Academic Stress in Pasifika Students in Aotearoa New Zealand", present the case of one institution and provide evidence on factors associated with academic stress and preferred sources of support for their Pasifika students. Fifty-four Pasifika students responded to the survey. Analysis and presentation of results in this article will be of interest to programme leaders and those in support roles for students from minority groups in institutions, including international students.

The final article in this issue also presents a literature review of research in a professional education context. "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer Concerns in Professional Psychology Education" by Paula Collens and Elizabeth du Preez reports on results of a narrative review (the systematic and rigorous approach to the search and analysis of literature that was undertaken is detailed in the article) guided by two research questions: "1) what approaches are employed/recommended for the education of psychologists to prepare them to work with LGBTIQ+ people and 2) what are the issues pertaining to the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ concerns in the education of psychologists?" (p. 142, in this issue). Collens and du Preez' review highlights a number of issues with the existing literature around professional psychology education in relation to LGBTIQ perspectives to make an important contribution to the literature and provide clear directions for future research.

Completing the *WJE* issues for 2023, please look out for a themed issue, dedicated to social transformations in post-socialist countries (Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan) and their impact on education, guest edited by Liudmyla Mashtaler. *WJE* is happy to publish this themed issue in support of our academic colleagues from these regions. Not all manuscripts are about Ukraine or authored by Ukrainian researchers; however, a common past within the geographical boundaries of the former USSR united the countries not only into a political union but also sometimes into collegial teams. The ways of

life, economic situations, historical changes, and national ideas had many things in common for some time. The research in this upcoming issue concerns education and educational management as well. It should interest international readers, at this time, to learn more about how a common past impacts these issues in current-day Ukraine and other "post-socialist" and post-Soviet countries and compare their unique features.

If you are a teacher/reader, I wish to also draw your attention to recent special issues of *Teachers and Curriculum* concerning The Arts and STEM, another WMIER journal available free and open access at <https://tandc.ac.nz/index.php/tandc>.

A big thank you to our reviewers for 2022 and 2023. Pandemic and post-pandemic(?) experiences as academics can (and did) often result in tiredness and frustration. Special thanks to my colleagues who said "yes" to undertaking a review when everything seemed against us. All of us in the team at *WJE* gratefully appreciate your time and effort to undertake reviews for *WJE*.

I would also like to give a personal thank you to Malinder Singh-Mahal and Margaret Drummond, Journal Administrators; Dr Cathy Bunting Director, Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research; Professor Bronwen Cowie, Associate Dean Research, Education Division; Professor Linda Mitchell, past Director, Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research and past Co-Editors Dr David Fa'avae and Dr Elizabeth Reinsfield; and members of the *WJE* Editorial Board for their unstinting efforts in producing this high-quality educational journal of Aotearoa New Zealand.

And finally, I thank reviewers and readers and authors and everyone for making *WJE* possible. Your willingness, kindness, and support to the quality of the journal is very much appreciated.

Nga mihi nui kia koutou katoa,  
Kerry Earl Rinehart

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