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Introduction

This final 2017 *Waikato Journal of Education* issue is an eclectic mix. The issue is a celebration of great diversity—of topic, country of origin, education sector, research frame and context. As part of this celebration, we are including a number of successful doctoral abstracts that follow the six general articles.

The articles

The articles offer a range of educational sectors spanning primary school settings to tertiary. We also move offshore from New Zealand to other parts of the world, such as Fiji, Nigeria and India. Topics range from the problematics of gaining and sustaining access to research participants in educational settings, to mathematics education, to undergraduate study behaviours, and to professional development.

Amundsen, Msoroka and Findsen explore the complexities of accessing participants in contexts where the stakes are high for potential participants. They address possible ethical issues when researchers wish to learn from participants in challenging circumstances. They conclude with findings relevant to all educational researchers.

Two articles centre attention on mathematics education, but from very different contexts. Bailey's examination of problem-solving in primary mathematics, tracking one teacher's efforts to embed this in her programme, is a New Zealand-based study, while Abah described using history as context for teaching mathematics in a Nigerian undergraduate mathematics programme. In exploring a different topic also related to undergraduate contexts, Ishii sought to make sense of study behaviours and links to academic achievement in a New Zealand university.

Professional development was of interest to Daly and Sharma, who report on the reciprocity between Indian teachers and New Zealand educators supporting the Indian teachers to develop their pedagogical practices. Professional development was also Mohan's focus in Fiji. These authors compared rural and urban teachers' perceptions of professional development in supporting their pedagogical learning and practices.

As a group, these articles offer a window into diverse research interests and findings as well as a window into ideas and contexts beyond what we might know ourselves. Together, these articles serve to broaden our understanding of aspects of educational practice and research.

The doctoral abstracts

Aritonang's doctoral work explored how Indonesian teachers coped with both developing how they taught English, while using blended learning methods. Carlyon's doctoral study also focused on



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teacher capability, this time relating to how primary school teachers in New Zealand coped with the transitions involved in changing the year levels they taught. From an early childhood point of view, Clarkin-Phillips' study examined how a New Zealand kindergarten community in a socially deprived area became a space in which "adults [could] realise their aspirations", again developing a theme of development and change. In another early childhood context, Hooker's thesis focused on ways in which ePortfolios "impact on parent and whānau engagement with their children's learning; teachers' formative assessment practices; how they contribute to children's learning journeys and indeed how children could use ePortfolios". Learning new things is a constant for the participants in the doctoral theses so far, and Lee's is no exception, yet it has a different focus from the ones already alluded to. Lee sought to understand more of how Asian migrant women established identities for themselves in Aotearoa New Zealand, while acquiring competence in a new language.

Literally on another (musical) note, Locke's interrogation of the Orff approach to music education in the Aotearoa New Zealand school context, reflected on the "impact of the Orff approach upon teachers' lives and work. In particular, it illustrates some of the consequences of the construction of music as a form of embodied behaviour available to all people and offers some examples of specific ways in which educational practices can reflect this belief".

Maezuma's abstract follows. She based her study of women's educational leadership on the cultural and social practices of women leaders in the matrilineal Solomon Islands' island of Santa Isabel, discovering that these women leaders exercised an embodied leadership as a symbolic act of reproduction. Her work adds to what is known about educational leadership from women's perspectives, particularly adding to the knowledge based on developing island nations contexts.

Returning to the context of New Zealand schools, Mangan wondered how secondary school teachers, whose practice came within the Technology Curriculum orbit, could be supported to enhance their classroom use of web-based resources. Merry, on the other hand, sought to understand how early childhood education (ECE) could make better use of digital technologies for pedagogical purposes. And again in the ECE domain, Tuafuti investigated the establishment of total immersion Samoan ECE and bilingual units in primary and intermediate schools. Tuafuti found "resilience of the participants in defending what they believe is right as far as fa'asāmoa is concerned, and the powerful role of emotions in personal and educational lives".

Poudyal's study centred attention on macro and micro politics at play in private secondary schools in Nepal, within the context of the overthrow of the monarchy by Maoists. It reveals some of the wider political forces being reflected within these schools' organisation and distributions of power. While Poudyal's study highlighted a desire by the private school owners to concentrate power, Swanson's thesis sought to examine how power and decision-making can be fostered with New Zealand primary school students through using Mantle of the Expert approaches to learning about science. This occurred by offering students safe ways to explore science ideas and problems through the framework of the role play the Mantle approaches established. She found that "working within an ethical 'expert' scientist position enhanced students' motivation to learn and produce high-quality work, as well as enlarging their conception of how science affects humanity". This level of student agency being fostered in the school setting offers ideas for other teachers to explore.

Finally, White explored how South African boys adapted to life during adolescence in New Zealand. White's "analysis included an examination of how they reconstructed adolescence from a position of young adulthood" and how "the subject positions that the boys inhabited held different configurations of threat and promise of social inclusion based on their particular South Africanness".

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