



EDITORIAL

'For students by students'

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For students by students

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Education in the North has long been a proud publisher for early career researchers, postgraduate students and practitioners. This is perhaps due to an inherent awareness of the challenges these authors may face in trying to get involved and publish their work. The tradition of offering a platform for such authors began in the earliest days of the journal and continues to this day. The latest example is this special issue, titled 'For students, by students', which invited postgraduate education students to share their academic works. Additionally, this issue provided the opportunity for postgraduate students, at various stages of their doctoral journey, to take on the role of the guest editors.

The invitation was answered with papers and features entertaining a wide array of topics. Because of the range of themes, it also felt appropriate to include more 'general' papers from early career and established researchers. As a result, this special issue, perhaps representing the richness of education research in the North, has broad scope. Waterman-Evans, for example, explored the understanding of Wilhelm von Humboldt's conception of Bildung through Donna Haraway's 'composist' posthumanism by identifying and analysing its three aspects: individuality, unity of nature and mind, and holistic knowledge. McClure, using Hargreaves' five emotional geographies as a social constructionist analytical framework, sought to understand how student teachers understand their emotions while constructing their personal teaching identity and practice during school placement experience. On the other hand, Stambekova's research investigated how the effects of remote foreign language teaching can affect teacher effectiveness in a developing country. Kokko, Pihlaja and Takala, similar to McDonald, explored educators' perceptions about the implementation of various pedagogies. The former trio investigated Finnish teachers' attitudes towards co-teaching through qualitative methodologies. The latter researcher's paper focussed on Scottish teachers' experiences around implementing mastery maths- an Asian method of teaching mathematics in primary and secondary education. Finally, Lager and Gustafsson-Nyckel combined two distinct theoretical approaches to examine children's perspectives about meaningful leisure time in formal settings.

Within this cavalcade of research foci what we all share, as established, future and early career researchers, is our stories: what made us embark on journeys riddled with research and where we hope to go. Likewise, we, as researchers and educators, share our passion for reflection and learning. To emphasise the common thread, we, the guest editors, wanted to include the reflections of those who

contributed to this special issue. As such, all three of us wrote a small account of our experiences as editors collaborating, for the first time, to publish an issue of this prominent and well-established education journal. Further, and perhaps more importantly, we invited our authors to reflect on their journey to the research and getting published as well as lessons learned and taken forward. The resulting narratives are below.

The editors

Laura: *I joined the editorial team for this issue of the Education in the North mainly to open up my horizons. As a doctorate student just before submission, I wish to make the most of my time as a full-time student and get involved in as many various projects as possible. Taking on editor responsibility at a prestigious, peer-reviewed journal has indeed been very worthwhile – there is as much to be learnt from others' development as it is from your own. Additionally, through being one of the guest editors of this issue I began to grasp the skills journal editors need, the challenges they may face and the returns they may receive for their hard work. I have learned that there isn't just one correct way of communicating ideas. I have also learned that there are many transferable skills that can be brought to positions that may seem foreign to each other. Finally, I have come to realise that seeing an issue come together is as rewarding as getting your own work published.*

Sirui: *I undertook the student editor responsibility of the special issue of Education in the North in June 2021. At that time, I was a first year PhD student, who had no clue about academic journals and publication processes. The only thing in my head was to read as many journal articles and books as possible. I knew this was far from being an independent researcher. I realised I should actively take part in the academic community. I was intrigued to know what happened in knowledge production from the authors' perspective and how a group of experienced researchers monitor the knowledge production process itself. For me, understanding the nuts and bolts behind the scenes is more interesting than just enjoying the front stage show, because the former leads the latter, making it happen and being seen. Although crafting work behind the scenes may not provide appropriate chances to be well known by every audience, it is already great in itself. With this perception in mind, from June 2021 until now, I volunteered as a student editor for EITN and closely worked with two other PGR students, Laura and Emmi. With the help of the EITN's editors, we kept records of expressions of interest, submissions, authors and reviewers; we set up a number of online meetings throughout the year for editing and editorial decisions; we jointly hunted for potential reviewers worldwide before the approaching deadline; and we worked internationally with seven hours' time difference as I was in China for fieldwork. I gained more than I could provide in this process. Behind the closed doors of knowledge production, I learned a lot from my PGR peers, EITN editors and authors. Having an opportunity to work with them was already the reward.*

Emmi: *As a PhD student and emerging researcher, I realise that I need to continuously enhance my research and generic skills. Having a guest editor role in the student issue of the EITN journal provided a lot of learning opportunities that support the development of my research and transferable skills. Firstly, I learned ways to review and provide feedback on other people's works. In particular, I developed*

a new understanding about reviewing, whereby it is about providing constructive feedback rather than just highlighting the weaknesses of written pieces. I also became more open to receiving feedback from other people on my work because I realise that feedback can enhance my work. Secondly, I learned about the way people critically construct arguments in articles and provide supporting evidence for the argument. Besides the research skills, I also developed more generic skills, such as collaborative and communication skills, through working and interacting with other editorial and board members. Those two generic skills can assist me in conveying ideas as well as discussing them with colleagues.

The Authors

Louis: *This is my first journal article to be published, but hopefully not the last! It has been a long journey from when I first registered my interest to final publication. It would be dishonest to characterise this process as one free of bumps in the road which, at times, felt like impassable mountains. However, when I look back at the quality (or lack thereof) of the original submitted work and compare it with the final piece, I am satisfied that the journey has been worth it. I now have a fresh respect for and valuing of the peer-review process: talking with each other, posing questions to our peers, and prompting renewed thinking, perhaps in unexpected directions, are surely what the essence of academia is all about.*

Another feeling I am left with is gratitude, in particular for the hard work and support of the editorial team: Laura, Emmi and Sirui. This has been a collaborative process from start to finish, and the finished article published here is as much testament to the work of the EITN team as it is to mine. Thank you.

Elizabeth: *I came to Scotland about four years ago from the United States to start my PhD. I remember hearing for the first time that it was important to get published but could be very hard to do during your PhD. It has been a long journey and at times I was ready to quit. I am glad I stuck with it and kept going as that is the way we must carry ourselves during any educational journey. My supervisor has been my rock throughout this journey, and it has strengthened my desire to continue to be a supportive tutor, supervisor and teacher as I continue to guide new upcoming teachers into the teaching world. As my dad has always told me, "If it was easy then everyone would be doing it."*

Assel: *I came to work on my first journal article through a lot of reflections on how I define myself as an educational researcher and as a language teacher. Born and raised in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, I witnessed how education has undergone massive reforms trying to catch up with a concept of "teaching and learning of 21st century skills". Transformation of the rich past of Soviet traditions in education introduced the VUCA world and left lasting marks on Kazakhstani schooling. All school stakeholders involved- school leaders and teachers, parents and students, endowment funds and board of trustees, Ministry of Education and Science and researchers- realised that formal learning does not happen only in brick-and-mortar schools. Innovative educational technologies (edtech) available nowadays change our perception of how teaching and learning takes place in the 21st century. In my work in this issue, I explore English language teachers' views on teacher effectiveness in remote teaching and learning, i.e., with the help of edtech. As I sought to understand what on-site English teachers and remote English teachers perceive of teacher effectiveness. I also learned how to keep a distance between the research*

and the researched. As I was one of the remote teachers, I had a great challenge to study the problem through my research participants' lens and construct their world rather than imposing my views on the studied phenomenon. While the article narrates on-site English and remote English teachers' views on teacher effectiveness, it also unfolds the story of how post-Soviet Kazakhstani education must take a giant leap in order to prepare their students for the VUCA world.

Moving into the publication process with EITN, I was reminded every time how valuable it is to have an external reviewer's opinion. Their opinions helped shape the paper to the extent I enjoyed reading it myself. It is my hope that this informal mentoring received from journal reviewers thickened my skin and guided toward publishing quality papers in the future.

Marjut, Päivi and Marjatta: *Marjut Kokko works at present as a special education coordinator in the city of Oulu. She has been working over 15 years as a special education teacher. In her dissertation, she studied the possibilities of co-teaching to promote inclusion and teachers' collaboration. Currently, she is studying students' experiences of special needs education at the University of Oulu.*

Päivi Pihlaja, adjunct professor, works at present at the University of Helsinki in early education. She has been working over 20 years in special education and special teacher education in the University of Turku. Currently, she is leading projects called Inclusion: values, policy and implementation and EduSteps, which is a part of a longitudinal and multidisciplinary study called Steps to Healthy Development led by the University of Turku. Päivi Pihlaja is also taking part in the HOHTO-project. Her research interest is focused on inclusion, social and emotional difficulties and early (special) education.

Marjatta Takala works as a professor of special education at the University of Oulu, Finland. Her research interests are in special and comparative education, inclusion, curriculum issues, hearing-impairment, reading skills and in teachers' professional development. Currently, she participates in a research and developmental HOHTO-project which is a joint initiative with six universities in Finland aiming to develop teacher education. It is financed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. She is also a partner in two common projects with Umeå University in Sweden; one of these studies inclusion in sport associations and the other focuses on the internationalization of higher education. She has been the editor of several books related to special education, the latest is about inclusion in Finland.

Karin and Jan: *We have developed new understandings of children's perspectives by combining theoretical perspectives in an innovative way. To be able to understand children's perspectives of meaningful leisure time we didn't only need Wolf's philosophical understanding of meaning in life, we also needed to gain knowledge about how children's perspectives relate to structure and conditions in the daily practice of school-age educare. With that ambition, we used Stones' theory of structuration that is a development of Giddens' work. This model of structuration made it possible to analyse strategies and resources children have and use, and, in combination with meaning as subjective or objective, we found different practices for children's meaningful leisure time. Most important in that finding is children's agency, in how they use both individual and collective strategies to create meaningful leisure time, and in addition how a collective organization with friends is the most important resource in school-age educare.*

Karin Lager is a senior lecturer in child and youth studies, has a background as a teacher in school-age education and is now a teacher and researcher in University West and University of Gothenburg, in Sweden.

Jan Gustafsson-Nyckel is a Professor in Educational Sciences, has a background as a teacher in school-age education and is now working as a teacher and researcher within teacher education at University West, Sweden.

Suzanne: *When working as a primary school teacher I became passionate about research. I, therefore, decided to work on furthering my career by undertaking a master's in education (MEd). Due to the pandemic, I now teach mathematics online, helping children catch up, and working with the National Catch-Up Programme in England. While teaching in primary school and more recently online, I have become aware that because of the volume of the numeracy curriculum, there is undue pressure on teachers and pupils to successfully undertake its contents.*

With my original background in Offshore Planning Engineering roles, I base my mathematics lessons on the engineering practice of reasoning from first principles, by reverse engineering mathematical problems. I was, therefore, intrigued by the idea of adopting Asian methods of teaching mathematics, when it was suggested in the Scottish Government 'Making maths count' report, as this concept also draws on the idea of a bottom-up approach. In 2019, while working in a primary school, I observed and took part in the adaptation of the then-named Mastery Maths programme, an Asian method version. I could see many challenges and the potential for misrepresentation of such a paradigm shift in teaching mathematics from a different cultural perspective. This unfolding situation coincided with my MEd thesis and thus led the research project on the influence of teacher beliefs and attitudes, as I feel there are many variables to be considered before adopting such an approach.

The journey to my research being published in EITN was a valuable reflective learning experience. My MEd thesis results opened many potential areas for further investigation which I feel require more exposure. It is with this in mind, that I wish to continue researching in the area of education, paying particular attention to teacher and student agency and furthering my research repertoire.

Concluding thoughts

Reading these narratives from authors and editors, it seems obvious that all involved in the publication of this issue benefitted greatly from the experience. Indeed, the editors enhanced various academic and transferable skills, such as liaising between authors and reviewers, collaboration and argument construction. We also started to understand the ongoing processes 'behind the scenes' of a journal. Our authors, much like us, learned to conduct and value peer feedback which can contribute to reflection and continuous improvement not only in terms of academic writing, but also in our perspectives towards education research. Because of these realised benefits, we would like to extend our gratitude to the editor and the board of Education in the North for initiating this special issue. We also hope that future generations of postgraduate students will also be lucky enough to have opportunities to edit or contribute (or both) to the publication of an issue in an established journal.