CHANGE: TRANSFORMATIONS IN EDUCATION

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Change: Transformations in Education seeks to promote discussion of a wide range of issues, themes and problems arising from the varieties of change which now impact upon education at every level, in differing contexts and with enormously varied results. The orientation of the journal is cross-disciplinary and critical. The journal's intended readership is that of educational policy-makers, analysts and activists working in contexts of social and organisational change and development. It also aims to interest professionals involved in the planning and implementation of educational programs across all education sectors nationally and internationally. The journal is published twice a year, in May and November. These two issues constitute one volume.

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As I am writing this editorial significant national and state developments are producing challenges and changes for all educators. Nationally the plans to develop a national institute of quality teaching and learning is occurring as states develop their own plans for institutes of teachers to reform the teaching profession. All of these initiatives have at their core visions of improved professional learning and expertise. A feature of the articles presented in this issue is their concern with teacher and professional learning in a variety of contexts. The issue presents nine papers that chronicle change and highlight the role of professionals in improving the teaching and learning of students.

The first paper by Campbell and Sherington examines the pasts, present and futures of an iconic Australian institution – the public comprehensive high school. Drawing on an extensive set of interviews with comprehensive high school principals, the authors chart the current situation facing arguably Australia’s most important educational structure. Despite their diversity, resilience and strength, the authors show that the development of educational markets is providing a range of challenges that question the future of comprehensive education. This research echoes the wider community debate about the role of markets in the provision of public services. In this case, the authors have shown clearly the impact of such developments on a great Australian institution.

The development of moral and ethical understanding in college students was first explored by Perry in his seminal study of American college students in the 1970s. The paper by Cummings, Maddux, Maples and Torres-Rivera continues this tradition by exploring the concept of principled moral reasoning in teachers and counselors. The study reports on the condition of pre-service teacher and counselor principled moral reasoning and explores ways of improving moral development through curricula innovation in teacher and counselor education.

In the third paper in this issue Down and Wooltorton successfully explore the links between the needs of new teachers, especially in rural and remote workplaces, with critical pedagogy, both in school and teacher education. Drawing on the activist profession work of Sachs, Down and Wooltorton advance a range of propositions for critical teacher education pedagogy based on their qualitative case study analysis of the beginning teaching experiences of remote and isolated teachers. The paper makes a range of useful suggestions for both the curriculum and pedagogy of improved teacher education.

New school, education system and university partnerships are the theme of the paper by Graham, Phelps, Kerr and MacMaster. The paper explores one of the new university developed board-endorsed courses that provide a new bridge for intending teacher education students to explore the role of teachers as a way of presenting teaching
as a career to high-achieving school students. The paper evaluates the success of the course and the partnership and provides significant insights into the underlying pedagogies that such new course developments require.

The discourse of revolutionary leadership as enunciated by Neil Cranston receives a philosophical analysis by Mackenzie in paper five. Mackenzie argues that much of the discourse of revolutionary leadership is misleading misinformation and takes issue with those views of leadership which are based on simplistic understandings of the role of market forces and their impact on school and system governance. In some ways, this paper reflects the themes raised in the first paper on comprehensive schools, market forces are becoming a greater factor in driving educational change. But Mackenzie argues that Cranston’s idea of revolutionary leadership provides no real insights on how schools and communities can respond.

The development of knowledge building coalitions, the rise of evidence-based practice, and the relationship between student and teacher learning are all taken up in the article prepared by Needham. This paper outlines three projects based on a model of teacher-student learning which highlights the links between teacher reflection and evidence from learners. The paper continues a theme highlighted in most editions of Change – the process of enquiry that informs the design of new conversations that give all those involved in teaching and learning a new voice.

Like the previous paper, Scanlon’s research on teaching standards gives students a voice in exploring quality teaching. Her research develops deep insights on the ‘unforgiving complexity of teaching’ by analysing student beliefs and perceptions about quality teaching. By identifying student perceptions, she is able to generate innovative insights on the current standards movement. This paper explores teaching standards from the learner’s perspective and is a timely addition to the debate about teaching quality.

Some researchers locate the standards movement within the quest for accountability in education. The paper by Vidovich and Porter explores the new national quality policy for higher education in Australia. It explores the dynamics and development of the new AUQA process and locates it strongly within the globalisation of higher education and development of international markets, the transfer of international models to Australian contexts, and the response of stakeholders to the forging of this new accountability ‘settlement’. New systems of accountability represent one of the more powerful new forces in education; and this paper fittingly identifies further crucial research questions in this area of educational change and transformation.

MIKE HORSLEY, EDITOR