

EDITORIAL

Teacher Education in the Arctic

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This special issue focuses on teacher education and teaching in the Arctic Regions. It is an initiative of the University of the Arctic (UArctic) Thematic Network on Teacher Education for Social Justice and Diversity, established in 2015. The Thematic Network contributed to the Arctic Council Finnish Chairmanship priority of education and also leads the Sustainable Development Working Group project 'Teacher Education for Diversity and Equality in the Arctic'. This special issue of Education in the North is one of the main activities of the project. The project aims to enhance the understanding of the teaching profession in the circumpolar north and highlight ways in which both pre-service and in-service teacher education can assist teachers in actively contributing to the Arctic's sustainable future.

The Arctic region is characterised by small populations, cultural diversity, a wealth of minority languages, differing socio-economic conditions and long distances. Fair educational opportunities in remote areas are key components for creating sustainable development and building resilience in Arctic communities. Equal access to a good basic education opens the doors to learning trades and to higher education, and to finding a place in working life. Teachers who work in the Arctic and northern communities, and who are committed to and inspired by the Arctic, are the key factor in providing a good basic education.

The call for papers for this special issue aroused great interest worldwide and as a result, we are happy to publish a double issue. The first issue concerns teacher education in the Arctic. This issue begins with a paper from the Canadian north, 'The Role of Teacher Education in Decolonizing Education in Canada's North: A Yukon Teacher Education Case Study' by Brian Lewthwaite and Mark Connell. It highlights how political developments can lead to education which is more responsive to Indigenous Peoples' cultural knowledge, systems and practices. This is returned to later in this issue.

Then we turn to initial teacher education with the article, 'Focus on participation: what can we learn from student teachers' participation in curriculum design and implementation? A case

study' by Sai Väyrynen and Lenita Hietanen. This article focuses on higher education students' involvement in the curriculum design of two teacher education courses. Students' participation can bring about more culturally relevant curricula and promote sustainable social development. The authors point out, in sparsely populated northern areas (in this case in Finland), it is important to engage students in curriculum design.

The third article is by Marcus Samuelsson and is entitled 'Pathfinders or Explorers: Student teachers' ways of handling the challenges of classroom management in a simulation'. This reports on a study of choices students made in a simulation of teaching sequences. It was found that the authoritative and democratic choices were the most popular.

A different type of online teacher education is covered by Sanna Brauer, Sanna Ruhalhti and Ville Hallikainen's article 'Digital professional learning: triggers in an online badge-driven process'. They investigated gamification of teacher professional learning and the triggers for learning online and, in particular, badge-driven online learning. Findings suggested that gamification motivates students.

We then move from online learning motivation to the barriers facing postgraduate students who travel for face to face professional learning. In the article 'Masters students' perceptions of distance and transport options' by Mirjam Harkestad Olsen and Hermína Gunnþórsdóttir, a study covering education Masters programmes in Norway and Iceland is reported. It was found that intrinsic motivation drives these students and difficult weather conditions does not put them off.

Difficulties in professional learning for First Nation teachers in Canada are addressed in 'Reconciliation, resilience and resistance in Inuit teacher's professional development and practices' by Kathy Snow, Shelley Tulloch, Heather Ochalski, Melanie O'Gorman. In this article the findings from a Forum of Inuit educations are reported. Key challenges include the organisation of learning and leadership, the place given to Inuit languages and culturally relevant education in schools and how to reduce isolation. Recommendations include building resiliency and skills so that teachers speak up and build networks so that they can support one another.

Challenges of a different kind are addressed in the next article 'Challenges, contradictions and continuity in creating a five-year teacher education programme in Iceland' by Anna Kristín Sigurðardóttir, Ingólfur Ásgeir Jóhannesson, Gunnhildur Óskarsdóttir. With reaccreditation and mergers coming around ever more frequently, it seems, this timely piece explains how one new Masters level programme was both created and dissected at the same time. The authors found that it is important to involve partners and stakeholders such as schools, trade unions and

relevant government departments. They stress the need not to make changes that are too rapid as this risks losing the soul of teacher education.

Following on from the Icelandic programme the next article puts an undergraduate community-based degree further across the Atlantic under the microscope. In 'Design and pedagogical practices of an Inuit-focused Bachelor of Education program in Labrador' Sylvia Moore and Gerald Galway refer to "two-eyed seeing" which respects the differences and draws on the positives of both Indigenous and Euro-Canadian ways of understanding the world. Echoing the experiences of the Icelandic endeavour, the creation and delivery of a site-based Indigenous education programme was found to require working with internal and external partners alongside some specific community-based issues.

In the 'Teacher Education in the Arctic' Issue we have three features which all deal with practices related to coming together and making a difference through shared work. In 'Seeing education with northern eyes: University of the Arctic Thematic Network for Teacher Education for Social Justice and Diversity in Education' Jennifer Spratt, Kirk Anderson, Mhairi Beaton and Rauna Rahko-Ravanti outline how this network came into being and the different perspectives the authors are able to bring to their work together.

In the next feature 'Sharing a Voice: Early-Career Scholars and the Arctic' five doctoral candidates share their experiences of participating in the University of the Arctic Conference at the University of Aberdeen in August 2017. Aristeia Kyriakou, Jan Peter Laurens Looovers, Annette Moir, Eleanor Peers and Keith Ruitter worked together to create a statement for the conference on how to include and develop early career scholars in the Arctic.

In the third feature, 'Turangawaewae, noetic spaces, and revalorisation: alternative principles of agentic education' Shane Theunissen explores how Indigenous peoples can engage in endogenous development through their own agency. Three case studies are used to compare to the Canadian situation, namely the Maori in New Zealand, the Aymara in Bolivia and the Bushmen of Kalahari in Southern Africa.

The second issue is devoted to educational studies in the Arctic and concerns 'Education in the Arctic' rather than teacher education. The first article is titled 'Using local Sámi culture and history to teach pupils about democracy' by Lisbeth Bergum Johanson and it covers the Norwegianisation of the Sámi and how today's pupils can learn democratic values such as equality and diversity through activities at a local museum. As Johanson states local history can "stimulate a sense of identity, rootedness and orientation in existence."

The next article 'Co-teaching in northern rural Finnish schools' by Riikka Sirkko, Marjatta Takala and Kim Wickman reports the findings of a study in a rural municipality. The requirement to co-

teach, teachers' different interpretations, the issue of inclusion and how co-teaching can bring about joy are discussed. It is interesting that teachers mainly reported their views without referring to their pupils.

This is contrasted with the article 'Staying in school, not dropping out—pupils' voices' by Anne-Mette Bjøru. She investigates the issue of high school drop out from the perspective of pupils who do not drop out in order to better understand what makes some students stay in upper secondary school in Norway.

From pupils' voices on staying or not staying in school we move to 'Teachers' beliefs on conflict and conflict resolution' by Oksana Obratsova. This study, conducted in Russia, investigates the difficulties of dealing with conflicts in school echoing Snow, Tulloch, Ochalski and O'Gorman's recommendation that to build resilience First Nation teachers in Canada should take part in positive conflict resolution education.

The next article 'Conceptions of school assessment: what do Finnish primary school students think of assessment?' by Annuroosa Ämmälä and Outi Kyrö-Ämmälä reports on a phenomenographic study of two different primary schools: a municipal one; and a Steiner school. The pupils could identify three purposes for assessment: to promote their learning; to provide information about their knowledge to them, their parents and teachers; and to inform schools and future employers about their skills and knowledge.

The article 'Teachers' perceptions of educational reform aimed at inclusion' by Suvi Lakkala and Helena Thuneberg is situated in Finland and considers whether different characteristics contributed to attitudes towards inclusion, for example gender, level of experience and in-service training on inclusive classrooms.

The final article in this issue is titled 'Digital tools for structure in a mainstream class' and in it Mirjam Harkestad Olsen reports on a study of the implementation of visual time aids which were used for the whole class rather than only for the children and young people with additional support needs. It was found that the visual time aids helped to provide a calmer environment in the classroom.

There are two Features relating to 'Education in the Arctic': the first is 'Recycling values for world peace – Finnish pupils and student teachers inspiring a Cuban artist' by Seija Ulkuniemi and describes a project involving those in the northern and southern hemispheres coming together to better understand different world views. This Feature contains photographs taken in Finland which are to inspire a Cuban artist.

In the Feature 'Implementation of inclusive education in a subarctic region' Natalia Flotskaya and Svetlana Bulanova describes a study to explore the social competence of "co-operation" in mainstream and inclusive classes in a subarctic region of Russia.

The last item in the double issue is a book review of the second edition of "Understanding the Danish Forest School Approach. Early Years Education in Practice" by Jane Williams-Sieghfredsen. The review is written by Erika Katjaana Sarivaara who highlights the positives and negatives of the book.

We hope that the papers in the double issue will contribute to a better understanding of teacher education and educational practices in the Arctic, and also enhance the capacity of education institutions to better serve their communities.