



EDITORIAL

Crossing Boundaries and Valuing Diversity

Helen Martin, h.martin@abdn.ac.uk

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3709-7865>

University of Aberdeen, Scotland

Claire Molloy, c.a.l.molloy@abdn.ac.uk

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2742-6418>

University of Aberdeen, Scotland

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Crossing Boundaries and Valuing Diversity

Helen Martin, h.martin@abdn.ac.uk

University of Aberdeen, Scotland

Claire Molloy, c.a.l.molloy@abdn.ac.uk

University of Aberdeen, Scotland

Education can sometimes be seen as something that only happens in formal settings and teachers as those that work with children and young people. In this issue, we hear from researchers working across diverse spaces and places of learning. Studies explore experiences of learners at home, university, teacher education and schools with spaces outdoor, indoor and online. This issue brings together people from the polar north to the equator and beyond where common themes run throughout about the importance of valuing diversity whichever space we work in and learning from others.

Crossing boundaries is a purposeful move to challenge actual or perceived boundaries between and within teachers, who they teach, where they teach and how they teach. Over the past year, in particular, we have all had to communicate in different ways with both known and new colleagues at a distance. Yet through this difficult situation there is a clear and positive realisation that opening up time and space, crossing boundaries, to share our stories is an important part of re-imagining what education might be and who educators are. Looking beyond opens up new thinking, re-thinking our own histories and experiences.

We have enjoyed working with the authors and reviewers and appreciate the challenging, supportive spaces that open up conversations with our own research-lives and those of others. The previous issue '[Wayfinding conversations: disrupting education to disrupt marginality](#)' brought together studies that worked in different ways, disrupting marginality for learners and teachers. On a similar vein, this idea of wayfinding and disrupting marginality can be considered through the experiences of researchers and the publishing process. The editors and authors in the previous issue modelled a different collaborative approach to the editorial and this *ceilidh* is worth threading through this current and future issues. Our thanks to the authors in looking back and looking forward and we hope that readers will enjoy looking-beyond.

Authors (*musicians*):

Paul: With a background spanning several countries as diverse as Somalia, Saudi Arabia, India, UK and Norway, seeing matters from the other's perspective and empathizing with those who do not "fit in", informs my work in education in Norway. Within fifty years, Norway has seen a seismic shift in its demographic with the percentage of immigrants going from 1.5% in 1970 to 18.5% in 2012 (close to 40% of the student mass in secondary schools in the Capital Oslo come from minority backgrounds). How is this change reflected in the curriculum? How willing and flexible is the education system in exploring ways to include minority-background children, some of whom still struggle with issues of belonging and identity, as was my experience as a high school teacher and in my current research as

a Professor? In his book, *Between the World and Me* (2015), Ta-Nehisi Coates writes about his schooling, “I was made for the library, not the classroom. The classroom was the jail of other people’s interests. The library was open, unending, free.” What can we as educators do to avoid the classroom becoming the “jail of other people’s interests”? Furthermore, how are supranational visions and directives (e.g. PISA tests) aiding or hampering the already challenging task of helping these students find their place in Norwegian education? It is such questions that speak truth to power, what Michel Foucault referred to as justice questioning itself, that directs my educational gaze and sustains the passion for equity.

Anne: My wayfinding resonates from a socio-cultural perspective of children’s play lives, in which a child’s growing social interactions with the world are a woven fabric of cultural values and beliefs, with an emotional connection to the land. From summer camping with my family, outdoor learning and play with my cousins, to learning needle work and flower pressing from my Métis grandmother, nature has always been a part of my wellbeing as a child, a mother and teacher. My research and writing recognizes how urbanization, curriculum shifts, and technology have impacted children’s emotional connections to the earth and their play lives.

Sylvia: I have come to this work through both my Mi’kmaw family and my spiritual connection to the land and waterways that I call home. My teachers are the Elders, children, and life of the land. As a mother and educator, I have observed each new generation of children develop deep connections with the natural world when they have frequent opportunities to be outside. My research reflects the need to extend learning beyond the classroom and the land pedagogies that educators use.

Our article purposefully looks at changing practices related to outdoor learning and Indigenous land-based learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. These practices have crucial implications for children’s wellbeing, development and learning. We consider how Indigenous culture, in particular relating to traditional learning and knowledge, and cultural connections to the land, have particular implications for children and their families. Drawing from a chorus of community voices, we discuss how outdoor, nature-based, and on the land experiences affect community wellness.

Lisbeth & Silje: Working as teacher educators in a rural district in Northern Norway for many years we have experienced both challenges and opportunities when educating future teachers to remote areas. To meet the need of qualified teachers and to ensure access to education for the population in the northern region of Norway, UiT – the Arctic University of Norway offers a 5- year master program as a flexible distance education model with a combination of physical and digital assemblies. This made it possible for the students to live and work at home when studying, but at what cost? As teachers in this flexible education, we were curious about how this model affected both teachers and students. We therefore conducted a study to reveal and address challenges and opportunities, in order to improve our education.

Eyvind: As a teacher educator for several decades, I have followed the criticism of teacher education globally, and particularly in the Nordic countries. While Finnish teacher education has gained international recognition for its high quality, teacher education in the other Nordic countries has been

criticised. This criticism, however, has been directed with varying intensity and for different reasons. Criticism has included weak relevance of the campus teaching and curriculum for the professional life of the teacher, that student teachers spend less time on their studies than the average student, and that there is a high drop-out rate. Educational authorities are looking for solutions to these challenges, partly by drawing inspiration from the policies of other countries and partly by seeking new ideas. The study we present in this issue looks at factors related to Icelandic student teachers' prospective commitment to the teaching profession. Research indicates that prospective commitment to a vocation is important to sustaining good professional practices. The purpose of our study was to explore, among Icelandic student teachers, how student teacher experiences in field-based practice and those in university-based courses are related to the student teachers' prospective commitment to the teaching profession, as well as their possible turnover intentions.

Aaron: What brought me to this work on Globalisation and Global Education? My academic background is in Sociology of Education with a particular interest in Civics and Citizenship Education. When I joined the University of New England (UNE) in Australia I became involved with the New South Wales (NSW) Global Education Project as local coordinator (in the School of Education). In addition, my teaching programme at UNE also involves subject disciplines (known as 'units' here) in which globalisation and global education issues are covered. As I am originally from Zimbabwe I became keen to find out and compare views of pre-service teachers in Zimbabwe and Australia on globalisation and global education issues bearing in mind the countries' differences (politically, culturally, economically and others). So, I embarked on this study which I found very interesting!

Lisbeth & Helge: As historians and teacher educators we have taught history and history didactic to students at UiT The Arctic university of Norway for several years. To make our teaching relevant it is important for us to know what is going on in the sector we educate our students for. The last few years have seen a massive introduction of iPads and other digital devices as the main learning platform in many Norwegian schools. This digitalization of classrooms made us curious on how the use of iPad affect history teaching and didactics. Thus, we decided to observe and compare two different sixth grade classes working with the subject: the Viking age. One class located in a school using iPad as their main learning platform and the other class located in a school using a wider set of learning platforms. The insight we gained from observing these two classes contributes to the debate on how iPad may influence historical thinking in the classroom, and in a broader sense to the debate on how iPads affects teaching and learning.

Katrina: Looking back at the work which brought me to write this paper I can see all the influences in my career come together. My undergraduate degree is in Archaeology and my first employment was to take school groups through a physical reconstruction of a medieval house and archaeological dig. From working with school groups in this context I then went on to become a Primary school teacher and continued to share with my classes my passion for investigating the past. I have always been interested in using and playing with technology and tried to build this into my teaching practice as much as possible. Later in my career I shifted to become a teacher educator and it was here that the opportunity to design a digital game about the island of Iona came about. The areas of history, pedagogy and digital

technology came together in this project. This is my first article as solo author and marks another step in my career, it definitely won't be my last.

Christy and Barbara: Through our experiences working with pre-service teachers in our teacher education programs, we recognized that even though we met as instructors to discuss ways to support group work and co-design assessments, there were many variations with instructional and assessment approaches. We also noted, some student groupings were not as effective as others and managing team dysfunctions provided us with an opportunity to reflect on our assessment practices and clarify how individuals can demonstrate learning in group work situations. We also recognized that in-service or practicing teachers faced similar challenges as pre-service teachers. These reflections led us to apply for a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Grant to explore how instructional design might improve student learning in group work. We were interested in investigating the strategies that were supporting students working collaboratively in groups, the strategies instructors use to support students learning in groups and how group work can be assessed. As scholars, we also both value collaboration and believe that working together makes us stronger and that anchors and drives our scholarship, leadership, teaching and service.

Helia: I studied social anthropology at the Universities of Tehran and Stockholm and have worked as a journalist and educator. Professions which have given me experiences and skills in working with people but little understanding of how the academic world functions: alternating my writing style has been a time taking and challenging task. I have also worked with refugees and asylum seekers as well. My doctoral research falls within the area of adult education and education policy "*Lived Experiences of Syrian refugees from ESOL learning in the Scottish context: an exploration of policy and lived experiences*". In my research, I attempt to elicit refugee learners' voices and lived experiences where provision is not equally accessible for less privileged learners. On the contrary, more privileged learners, with stronger formal education, tend to benefit more: a finding which calls for reforms in policy and practice. Doing fieldwork is a precious learning opportunity: researching with Syrian refugees as a vulnerable group was a captivating, educating and still an emotionally intense experience. I had to learn how to research with a vulnerable group who have gone through traumatic experiences though remained resilient with high sense of agency. Reconciling being a professional and a fellow human 'self' is another challenge which provides me with treasured lessons.

Iryna & Lucy share a common interest in teacher training for higher education. Dr Kushnir is an early-career researcher who works in the area of the sociology of education with a particular focus on higher education, education policy, Europeanisation and social justice in education. Her interdisciplinary approach has led to significant scholarly contributions, which reveal the nuances of the interrelatedness of education processes and wider societal transformations. Dr Kushnir's work also had an important impact in practice following her collaborative work in creating the Ukrainian Educational Research Association. These achievements have been supported by her posts at the University of Edinburgh, where she also completed her PhD in 2016, the University of Sheffield and her current Senior Lecturer post in Education Studies at Nottingham Trent University. Dr Spowart is an experienced educational leader with a teaching career that spans over 25 years in higher education settings in the UK, Australia

