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Introduction to papers in this issue

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INTRODUCTION TO PAPERS IN THIS ISSUE

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We are pleased to present our General Issue of *Teachers and Curriculum* for 2019. Thank you to our established reviewers and authors for their continued support, and thank you to those new and emerging researchers who give us the opportunity to present useful articles for individual and group professional learning in education. Following our editorial, which discusses practitioner research, we give some information on each project's 'research design' behind the articles in this issue.

You will find in our last General Issue in 2018, a report by Carol Murphy, Abdullah Abu-Tineh, Nigel Calder, and Nasser Mansour on teachers' aspirations and perceived challenges relating to their own professional development (PD) which introduced inquiry-based learning into their grade 4 to 8 mathematics and science classrooms in Qatar. In this issue, Carol Murphy and colleagues return to the larger project to report on teachers' perceptions on the use of WebQuests as a didactic tool to support a student-oriented approach in *Changing from a traditional approach to learning: Teachers' perceptions of introducing WebQuests into mathematics and science classrooms in Qatar*. Interviews were carried out with 16 teachers after they had developed and used at least two WebQuests in their mathematics or science teaching. The interviews were carried out in Arabic. This article is of particular interest to anyone using a transformational model of PD, teachers and school leaders in contexts integrating digital technologies and also a good reminder of the potential of WebQuests.

Judith Mills' article *Making multiplication meaningful: Teaching for conceptual understanding*, is also taken from a larger study that analysed the professional knowledge of teachers when teaching numeracy. This article presents observations of three teachers teaching multiplication. Mills advocates for a three-pronged approach to improving children's understanding of multiplication: The use of equipment, word problems relating to the children's lives, and group discussion. Also, you may be interested in Mill's Thinkpiece in our 2018 General Issue on the terms, numeracy and mathematics.

Yiyi Zhu and Frances Edwards in *Teacher questioning in a Chinese context: Implications for New Zealand classrooms* reports on a study using short-structured observations on teaching questioning in a mathematics class in a Chinese primary classroom. Figures are used to present a strong visual representation of the use of questioning in this classroom. This article will remind teachers in all contexts of the benefits of quality questioning, and act as a jumping off point for investigating previous literature in this area. There are also implications for teachers outside of China with Chinese students in their class.

There is global interest in educational policy and research in teacher quality, qualifications and development. Teacher standards and key competencies have been developed in many countries by state authorities and these are core features of pre-service teacher education programmes. In the first of our two articles from Turkey, *Evaluating learning objectives of the pre-school teacher education programme in terms of special field competences: A curriculum alignment study*, Ozden Demir, Metin Kartal and Halil Ibrahim Kaya use a qualitative research design and content analysis to evaluate the alignment between the general competencies of the Turkish four-year Pre-School Teacher Education Programme and the courses' learning objectives and sub-competencies of the Programme. Aside from being an interesting exercise as a potential model for other contexts, it is informative to read the teacher competencies (officially) valued in Turkey.

In *Teachers' educational beliefs and curriculum orientations: A relational research*, Gökhan Baş and Cihad Şentürk from Universities in Turkey report on research to examine the relationship between teachers' educational beliefs and curriculum design orientations preferences. Participants were teachers working in public primary, elementary, and high schools in Bilecik province, Turkey. A quantitative research design, specifically prediction research, is used to identify variables that will

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predict an outcome or criterion. In this research, educational beliefs were adopted as the predictor variable, and curriculum orientations were chosen as the criterion variable to examine the degree of correlation between teacher beliefs and their curriculum orientation. Findings from this article will be a reminder of the significance of what a teacher already thinks, especially for facilitators of teacher professional learning.

Returning to New Zealand, Janette Kelly-Ware speaks directly to teachers of young children in *An open letter to teachers*. Janette concluded her doctoral thesis with this letter presenting both summary and timely reminders in her aim to encourage teachers to critically review their curriculum for consideration of very topical societal issues such as equality, justice and fairness.

In *Ethical research in the secondary school classroom* Susan Briggs, a secondary school teacher and University of Canterbury (NZ) postgraduate student, tackles two very important ethical principles of research, voluntary participation and informed consent. As the basis for discussion, she presents research scenarios set in secondary schools and containing ethical dilemmas. Briggs' aim is to encourage teacher reflection and potential ways to address ethical concerns in research design that may require voluntary participation and informed consent in order to minimise risks for students in classrooms and for themselves. We recommend this reading for any teacher undertaking research in their own or other school settings.

In the final piece in this issue, *An endnote*, we provide some advice and recommendations of helpful texts for teachers who are currently or intending to conduct research. If you are currently involved in a research project we would love to hear your thoughts on these recommendations. This is an especially significant time for Aotearoa New Zealand; the early childhood curriculum has been recently revised, and the school curriculum may also be due for renewal. We at the *Teachers and Curriculum* journal also invite manuscripts on research by teachers to disseminate the results of such studies.