

Editorial

Tēnā koutou katoa

It is a pleasure to present you with Issue 2, 2019 of *Set: Research Information for Teachers*. The articles in this issue span a range of topics and learning areas. The diversity of content honours the breath of educators' professional expertise. It also recognises that past experiences in teaching and learning usefully inform future endeavours. Many of the articles contain an element of retrospection. The authors lend a critical eye to previous successes (or otherwise) to help shape key principles and practices for moving ahead. The articles show how bringing together the insights of seasoned teachers along with new information from data analysis can support the process of selecting what to take forward and what to leave behind.

Angela Feekery and Carla Jeffrey worked with experienced Māori librarians to co-design the Rauru Whakarare Evaluation Framework. The framework brings a kaupapa Māori approach to scaffolding students' information selection processes in an information saturated environment. It visually sets out five concepts—whakapapa, orokohanga, mana, māramatanga, and aronga—to help secondary and tertiary students to evaluate the quality of the material they access. The authors would like to hear from kaiako in kura kaupapa Māori, primary, and intermediate schools to understand whether the framework might resonate for younger students as well.

Primary teacher Katie Gormley co-developed an article about socio-scientific issues in primary schools with academics Sally Birdsall and Bev France. The authors drew on the experiences of 20 primary teachers who had guided students to inquire into some form of real-life problem in the past. By bringing these teachers' comments together with literature, the authors encourage readers to step towards inquiry projects that are steeped in both scientific knowledge and stakeholder viewpoints. A clear aim is to build students' understanding of the Nature of Science as well as their Science Capabilities for Citizenship.

Independent Learning Environments (ILEs) can “conjure up images of the 1960s and 1970s when traditional classrooms were opened up to create ‘open plan’ environments catering for multiple classes and teachers” (p. 21). So says primary mathematics teacher Maree Logan, writing with her Masters in Education

supervisors Glenda Anthony and Peter Rawlins. Their article pays attention to newer pedagogies in mathematics which lend themselves to “flexible, variable spaces that may evolve” (p. 27). The teachers interviewed “felt that these arrangements were conducive to the provision of ongoing opportunities for students to develop agency in their mathematics learning” (p. 27).

Judy Clark, an ESOL teacher in a primary school, was “worried that English-language learners (ELLs) were underperforming when using a test like the PM Benchmark Reading Assessment Resource”. Her article, written with Senior Lecturer Rosemary Erlam, considers the validity of assessing these students' reading comprehension with a standardised test administered in the English language. A small 4-student case study supported Judy's hypothesis that “dynamic assessment would allow for a fairer or more accurate judgement of the reading level of English-language learners” (p. 32). The article sets out the types of assistance and mediation that were provided to the students.

Rose Yukich introduces her historical research into the Curriculum Review behind the 1980s Tomorrow's Schools reforms and connects it to the current work of the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce. She argues that the Treaty of Waitangi has acted as a “warm idea” within both national conversations, three decades apart. She explains how the Treaty draws policy makers and school communities towards building relationships, honouring partnership, and striving towards social justice and equity. In her words the Treaty “offers an ethical framework from within which to guide ongoing school commitments and responsibilities to Māori students and the communities to which they belong” (p. 38). She also offers practical suggestions for teaching students about New Zealand's history, including links to some tried and true online resources.

In He Whakaaro Anō Alison Davis, a professional learning and development provider, provides a series of case studies borrowed from the teachers she's worked with across multiple schools. The case studies illuminate how teachers can cultivate student agency to raise the engagement of priority learners. She argues that “developing student agency requires teachers to

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understand the importance of intrinsic motivation” (p. 42), which her article unpacks according to six key elements.

Our new section, He Rangahau Whakarāpopoto, provides an opportunity for authors to present a summary of research insights about a specific issue. The aim is to inform teachers’ understanding of a pressing topic or debate in New Zealand education. Time has taught us to anticipate a rise in media attention around the results release of Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) due later this year. Rosemary Hipkins presents a balanced picture of the drivers behind PISA, how its assessments are constructed, and what teachers may want to be attentive to and wary of in reporting.

Our final section, Assessment News, is filled with an entry from Darcy Fawcett, Head of Science at Gisborne Boys’ High School and across school teacher for the Turanganui-ā-Kiwa Gisborne Kāhui Ako Community of Learning. He outlines a process he’s developed to help teachers capture and analyse the impact of their changes of practice on student achievement. He strives to support inquiring teachers to be able to tell statistically valid data stories that can inform their decisions about what they repeat for next year’s students, or choose to leave in the past.

Research has an important role to play in supporting practitioners and academics to evaluate what is and isn’t working for learners today as we face into tomorrow’s environmental, social, and economic challenges. As the government attempts to meet these challenges with a line-up of reviews regarding our nation’s school governance and management structures, assessment systems, and secondary–tertiary pathways, I suspect that many of the analyses contributed in this issue could usefully inform policy agendas. By bringing together the wisdom of practitioners with the theoretical perspectives of researchers, the articles model how important it is to create space for reflection and collaboration in fast-changing times. I hope that drawing from the journal might help teachers to focus their attention and stabilise their footing in the shifting landscape.

Ngā mihi ki a koutou, mō tō koutou mahi hira.

Josie Roberts
Set Editor