

Editorial

A warm welcome to readers of *set: Research Information for Teachers*, Issue 2, 2017. I write this editorial in the stillness of midwinter, amidst the hiatus of new growth and the pause of the school holidays. The slow pace contrasts with the business of teaching energetic students and heightens my awareness of the seemingly different timescales between research and practice. Practice demands full attention to the here-and-now, with instantaneous feedback available in students' eyes and actions. Research's elongated process of reflection and analysis incurs an inevitable time lag between raw experience and polished publication. At times, I find myself wanting to apologise to teachers for how long it can take for a burning practical issue to be defined, explored, analysed and, finally, presented in *set* for practitioners to act upon. However, the articles in this edition remind me that with the passing of time comes the power of perspective and the benefit of hindsight.

We open with two research projects conducted in the aftermath of the Canterbury earthquakes. Both articles document the immense resilience and unwavering commitment of school staff as they responded to instability in its many guises. Carol Mutch explores how children's rights were attended to in a range of school-led community building initiatives that aimed to mitigate the impacts of natural disaster on children's social, emotional, and educational development. Circling back to my opening paragraph, the article cautions us not to set up a false binary between research and practice; here students and teachers were supported to be researchers and the project made an immediate difference within each school community, as well as providing raw data for analytical research papers and "archival material for generations to come" (p. 4). Gerard Direen reports on 20 Canterbury principals' reflections about leadership based on their post-disaster contexts. Direen explains the magnitude of upheavals that resulted from earthquake devastation and rebuild programmes across Greater Christchurch. He outlines how principals rose to meet change and challenge head-on in support of their staff, students, and communities. Precious lessons emerge for all school leaders as well as those facing traumatic or testing times.

Leadership remains in focus for the next article with a lens on boards of trustees. Anne Younger and Lexie Grudnoff examine the factors that enable and constrain trustee involvement in decile 1 and 2 schools. Interviews with board chairs show how important the active encouragement from school staff can be. A wide range of community experiences, roles, and talents can transfer to governance. Nevertheless, parents don't often make the connection between their everyday experiences and a potential governance role. Nor do they tend to step forward themselves. Principals and teachers can offer a broader perspective on who might be appropriate. On a different tack, sometimes a principal's broader perspective can also help teachers to try out a new opportunity in the form of a shift to teaching a new year level. Tracey Carlyon and Garry Falloon report on survey results from over 500 teachers. Their findings demonstrate that, even when initially reluctant, most teachers perceive benefits from changing year levels. The transition contributes to their professional learning and adaptive practice.

The focus section in this issue is boldly titled Palangi teaching Pasifika. The first two articles are each written by a Palangi teacher who has embarked on an inquiry to learn from Pasifika students and improve culturally responsive teaching. Martyn Reynolds shares his learning about the Pacific relational concept of *vā*. The concept informed a video *mihī* process by which students introduced themselves to their new teachers. By tending to the *vā*, teachers then offered a critical self-reflexive response to the school's Pasifika communities. Reynolds speaks to the importance of "troubling a European relational world view" (p. 38). He suggests that "an understanding of relationships through one or more concepts of Pacific origin may be helpful in re-viewing Pasifika education in order to advance positive change" (p.35). Maggie Flavell shares her learning about how to *talanoa* with Pasifika communities. Her commentary is informed by a completed master's thesis and she has now embarked on a PhD, both with a focus on building inclusive relationships with secondary Pasifika students and their families to enhance educational achievement. She concludes "I still have much to learn and this reminds

me that humility is a common value to Pacific cultures” (p. 47).

The third focus article comes from David Fa'avae, a Tongan father, uncle, teacher, and doctoral researcher. He writes about Tongan children's family values and cultural activities. Through talanoa with multiple generations within kāinga, from grandfathers to grandsons, Fa'avae identifies six key learnings that schools could do more to recognise and develop when educating Tongan boys. They are: learning the importance of service to others; learning to be a good leader; learning teamwork within a group; learning values of loyalty and sacrifice; learning the importance of determination; and learning to value tauhi vā. The article presents a set of reflective questions and exemplary practices for teachers to consider on their journey towards culturally responsive practice.

Assessment News profiles the National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement: Wānangatia te Putanga Tauira (NMSSA). It provides a national picture of student

achievement in Year 4 and Year 8. Charles Darr explains how the NMSSA's sampling design involves just a subset of students in 200 schools each year. The project is helping to strengthen teachers' assessment capability and the results are of use to all schools regardless of whether their students participate or not. The project's continuous nature means that a New Zealand story of curriculum achievement can build up over time. With each year comes a new chapter. Reports on the Technology and Learning Languages learning areas, including students' knowledge of te reo Māori, will be released later in 2017.

All the best for the onset of spring. I hope that reading this issue helps you to find a comfortable balance between action and reflection and that it inspires new growth in your practice.

Josie Roberts
Editor

REMixING The Key Competencies

A curriculum design deck



Developed by Rosemary Hipkins
and Rachel Bolstad

A resource for teachers to take a fresh look at the New Zealand Curriculum key competencies.

Use the cards to think about ways in which rich learning tasks can provide opportunities for students to build and strengthen their key competencies.

“... thank you for sharing this resource with me; it made for an incredibly cool department meeting this morning.”

—SECONDARY SCHOOL HOD

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