Editorial

When we first dreamed about the format of LEARNing Landscapes in anticipation of its inception seven years ago, we decided that the inclusion of a commentary section, for which we would invite eminent scholars to comment on the theme of an issue, could add an interesting dimension to the journal. We did not anticipate the wonderful and willing responses we have received from a wide range of scholars over these years and the compelling thoughts they have shared with us. What has been a surprise to us is the connecting and converging themes that have emerged in these varied commentaries with little or no direction from us. These contributions have consistently provided a rich and contextual backdrop for the articles that ensue, and this issue is no exception. We are indebted to these many colleagues who have given willingly of their time and expertise to our journal.

Invited Commentaries

At the heart of teacher education is the undeniable importance of the classroom teacher in the lives of students. **Eigil Pedersen**, Professor Emeritus in the Faculty of Education at McGill University, and former Vice-Principal Academic, attests to this in his written recap of a study he and colleagues conducted in the 1970s and in his interview with us. He was able to show how a particular grade one teacher, Miss A, who made sure that *all* her students were reading by the end of the year, had an important impact on the subsequent test results of the grade six students she had taught, and then when studied longitudinally, a long-term impact on their adult lives. Although his teacher had not been Miss A, the passion that Pedersen had for this work was fueled at least in part by the fact that he had attended this school as an elementary student and later taught there in his early years as a classroom teacher. His work attests to the important difference a teacher can make for students and, ergo, the importance of teacher education.

Aiden Downey and **Lee Schaefer**, Assistant Professors of Education at Emory University in Atlanta, and the University of Regina in Saskatchewan, respectively, and **Jean Clandinin**, Professor of Education at the University of Alberta, argue for the importance of providing space in teacher education programs for pre-service teachers to make tacit their personal aspirations and practical knowledge which becomes career sustenance. Their work suggests that if there is dissonance between what novice teachers imagine for their classrooms and the actual roles and knowledge expected of them, attrition occurs because their personal and professional identities are put into question.

Similarly, **William Pinar**, Professor of Education and Canada Research Chair at the University of British Columbia, argues that the "technologization" of teacher education, for example, testing standardization, detracts from and undermines the unique and everyday experiences of future teachers. He discusses how these everyday experiences are essential for developing social and context-specific problem-solving skills that are the requisites for good teaching. Pre-service teachers need the time to question and learn from their experiences as an integral part of their programs.

Madeleine Grumet, Professor of Education and Communication Studies at the University of North Carolina, muses about the lack of novels about teaching, and laments that in those that do exist, the teaching soon "slides out of it" and what is left are personal dramas or romances. She underscores the importance of having pre-service teachers explore critically their own educational experiences/histories alongside the legacies and finished stories of great teachers in order to inject hope into the future of stories yet to be completed.

Last and by no means the least, **Michael Wilson**, PhD, a jazz trumpeter, who for many years has been a public arts education advocate (co-chair of the National Roundtable for Teacher Education in the Arts), and taught art part time over several decades in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, describes in a compelling interview how he has created situations in which pre-service teachers get in touch with their own creative and aesthetic natures through the arts. He suggests that prospective teachers who find a synergy with the arts develop a readiness to learn within themselves, and carry this forward in their work with their future students.

Valuing Self-Knowledge and Promoting Critical Reflection

This strong theme that permeates a number of the commentaries is picked up in the submission by **Elliott-Johns**. She suggests that guidance is needed in teacher education programs to help pre-service teachers understand how to build on their own knowledge and critically reflect about their thinking and practice. She emphasizes the need for support in reflective tasks and provides practical suggestions about how to integrate reflective practice into teacher education programs. **Sharma** and **Portelli** discuss the importance of promoting critical reflection that helps to unpack deficit notions of education. For example, many of the beliefs held about inner-city students, to which people are socialized and which, unfortunately, to the detriment of these students, become internalized as truths. They suggest that critical reflection is a crucial, but not necessarily painless process. It is needed before pre-service teachers enter the profession, which puts a demanding and important responsibility on teacher

educators. **Gulla** discusses the importance of poetry as a form of inquiry and as a way in which to explore identity in teacher education. She shares how autobiographical poetry writing forms a metaphorical bridge which allows pre-service teachers to articulate unexamined beliefs about teaching and learning, to understand new information, and to connect personally to their professional practice.

Content and Pedagogy in Teacher Education

A number of our contributors focused on the importance of having certain content in teacher education programs and of exposing pre-service teachers to pedagogy that they could subsequently use in their classrooms. **Vetter**, **Haig-Brown**, and **Blimkie** share how they have been "infusing" Indigenous knowledge into the teacher education program at York University at the Barrie, Ontario campus, so that it has now become an integral part of the curriculum. Their research suggests five principles for guiding the development of culturally respectful and meaningful content into a teacher education program. These include: 1) understand that "not knowing" is an opportunity for learning; 2) recognize the diversity of histories and teachings; 3) create space for alternate perspectives; 4) teach in context, using resources responsibly; and 5) move from inclusion to infusion. Their article discusses with examples what implementation looks like in classroom settings and the challenges that are faced by both the students and faculty involved in the program. **Todd, Beamer,** and **Goodreau** share a poignant story of the difficulty Todd faced, in spite of being an educator herself, when trying to help her son after he was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at age three. It was because of the excellent communication she enjoyed with her son's teacher that progress was made. The authors make a strong case for including parent-teacher communication and involvement in teacher education programs to address more successfully the needs of the growing number of ASD children. **Stroupe** suggests that educators draw on the idea of "ambitious instruction" (rigorous and equitable teaching) in areas such as literacy and mathematics and to integrate this into the teacher education science curriculum. He describes how three pre-service teachers used a planning template to build science units based on "big ideas" that enabled them to engage and build on students' knowledge in useful ways. He discusses some of the challenges these novice teachers encountered when they tried to implement these units in their field experience classrooms when this approach differed from that of their mentor teachers. **Christou** speaks from the context of Ontario education and posits that Social Studies occupies a pivotal place in the elementary curriculum where pre-service teachers and ultimately their students can be engaged and challenged to think about their world and how to live ethically and well in it. Building on Dewey's notion of learning by doing, he advocates "take action" projects where students define,

plan, implement, and share projects that respond to needs in the local community, are rooted in social justice, and integrate other areas of the elementary curriculum. **Zhang** describes an Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) literacy course for pre-service teachers that he has been teaching at the University of Windsor in Ontario. His work has shown that these students are able to learn the theoretical, pedagogical, and practical knowledge necessary for the effective use of ICT in teaching and learning through classes, workshops, field experience, and varied group projects. One of the challenges he and colleagues are attempting to face is how to differentiate their teaching in the course so that the consistently varying ICT needs among the pre-service teachers can be addressed.

Field Experiences in Teacher Education

> Field experiences have long been identified by both teacher educators and prospective and experienced teachers as a major, if not the most important, part of pre-service teacher preparation. It is broadly assumed that field experiences are the key components of preparation where prospective teachers learn to bridge theory and practice, work with colleagues and families, and develop pedagogical and curricular strategies for meeting the learning needs of a diverse population. (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2010, p. 595)

In a year-long ethnographic study, **Jacobs** was able to demonstrate that pre-service teachers in a literacy education program were receiving mixed messages about teaching and learning. While their program explicitly valued collaborative approaches for knowledge production, they were experiencing in their field placements how solitary and isolated teaching can be. She suggests that the often unquestioned aspects of field experience placements need to be examined and re-structured to reinforce in pre-service teachers the importance of collaboration and inquiry-based approaches in learning to teach. **Robinson** and **Bell**, in a collaborative study where Robinson was the professor and Bell the pre-service teacher, reflect on the value of an international field experience. They outline the various ways that field experiences are structured in Canadian contexts and discuss the growing interest in international field experiences. Finally, they describe in a dialogic format how Bell's international placement in Belize in some instances, "made the strange familiar" because of her preconceived ideas about what to expect, and in other instances, "made the familiar strange." Her international placement in Belize stretched her as a person and professional, and ultimately the experience confirmed her commitment to continue to grow as a teacher by teaching in other cultures and places.

Stories From Newly Inducted Teachers

Research has shown that there is a significant percentage of early career teachers that leave teaching within four to five years. Ostensibly, they leave because of personal and/or contextual factors (Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, 2012). **Driedger-Enns** and **Murphy**, in a narrative inquiry of the experiences of Anna, a second-year teacher, suggest that a shift is needed from the emphasis put on retaining teachers, to that of sustaining them. Furthermore, they show how when Anna found the space through the inquiry process to recount her personal and professional stories, she was able to embrace the tensions she was experiencing in her teaching, and use these as a place for sustenance, growth, and possibility. **Fortier** shares her journey of how she began her teaching career in her French immersion kindergarten classroom by teaching how she had been taught, using an "ordered system of means and ends" and transitioned, while doing graduate studies, to an embracement of an inquiry-based and student-oriented pedagogy. Her metaphor for this journey is the ups and downs of the Snakes and Ladders game. Time to reflect on her teaching, and to link her practices to theoretical and philosophical considerations, were critical dimensions of this journey.

Sustaining the Work and Growth of Teacher Educators

Benoit shares in her interesting qualitative study of a small group of female educators how relational learning occurred among them, which contributed to their professional support and growth. This informal process comprises three dimensions: 1) "continuity" (sustained contact over time); 2) "confirmation" (acceptance, approval, and validation); and 3) "contradiction" (presentation of opposing views after trust is established). Continuity and confirmation produce the necessary trust to create an openness for contradiction to occur and then opposing views help to push thinking and present other possibilities. She suggests that peer-learning partnerships among teacher educators in the context of respectful friendships hold the potential for sustenance and change. **Schnellert**, **Richardson**, and **Cherkowski**, three co-teacher educators at various points in their pre-tenure process, share how they support each other, and learn and grow by writing and responding to each other's "telling moments" in their teaching. They illustrate how collaborative forms of self-study and reflexive analysis supported them in implementing their learning, and helped them to attend to and embrace tensions they experienced in nourishing and challenging ways. **The Narrative Inquiry Group** is a writers' collective in the greater Montreal area made up of 11 teachers and non-teaching professionals. It meets every few weeks to share experiences of teaching through life writing using narrative inquiry, professional conversations, and literary métissage—life writing that expresses counter-narratives. This article provides a description of their process as well as a video documenting the outcomes of their work

which they have entitled, "The Blackboard Monologues." They show how both new and experienced educators gain confidence in their knowledge and abilities through this supportive process. **Hamilton** and **Pinnegar** provide a compelling closing piece to this group of articles. They share how they use "intimate scholarship," the self-study of teaching and teacher practices (S-STEP), to focus on the individual and make public some of the hidden knowledge that is not revealed in the usual forms of data. They provide a detailed example of this process with excerpts from the data to illustrate different understandings of professional knowledge. They argue cogently that intimate scholarship contributes to new understandings about teacher education and helps teachers and teacher educators to evolve and grow in their respective roles. Their work suggests the need to examine both the role of teacher educators and learners in context in research on teacher education.

In closing, I would add that in the United States there has been a protracted discussion on the future of teacher education that is linked to the K-12 standards movement. Cochran-Smith and Fries (2005) have suggested that the discussion generally fits into two camps—that of the deregulationists and the professionalizationists. The deregulationists want to dismantle and break up the monopoly of teacher education. They believe that acceptance into the profession should take various routes, and be based on rigorous testing which would continue into the profession and, at that time, be tied to the success rates of students on mandatory tests. The professionalizationists advocate rigorous teacher education programs that support the learning of diverse students. These authors suggest that the former is predicated on the belief of individual competition for private goods and the latter on creating public good. Abbott (2014), a British educator, in "Battling for the Soul of Education: Moving Beyond School Reform to Educational Transformation," makes a further analogy, suggesting that these two points of view represent having children grow up as "battery hens" or "free-range chickens." He makes the case for a free-range approach that encourages creativity and adaptability and that is not only "desirable, but also essential to what is otherwise the production of an over-schooled, but undereducated society" (p. 10). Sahlberg (2011) points to education in Finland. He suggests that the widespread reform movement endorses competition, standardization, test-based accountability, school choice, and education as an industry. In contrast, the Finnish public education system, which is recognized for having leading results among its students, embraces collaboration, personalization, trust-based responsibility, equity, and education as a human right. What is interesting about the contributions to this issue is how the messages strongly suggest the need for this transformational notion of teacher education (Abbott, 2014). The debate may not yet be over; meanwhile, there is definitely consistency about the direction it should take among the wide range of authors in this issue.

LBK

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