

Editorial

A lot has happened in education in England since the publication of the last edition of *RiTE*. The lack of an education bill in the Queen's Speech in May 2013 did nothing to halt the political spittle accompanying Coalition announcements on the National Curriculum, exam developments, teachers' pay and conditions, and the re-emergence of debates around the 14–19 curricula. David Laws' use of the rather disconcerting term 'secondary-ready' signals a long-awaited focus from the government on the period of transition from primary to secondary school. This, accompanied by proposals to report how 'Sally' and 'Tom' perform in National Curriculum tests in a decile ranking, was unsurprisingly more popular with some parents than with members of the teaching profession. The publication this summer of the OECD's *Education at a glance* report for 2013 made for depressing reading in terms of the ubiquitous 'NEET' category (a term used in England to describe those not in education, employment or training) of young people highlighting how the UK has, within the OECD rankings, still one of the lowest percentages of 15–19-year-olds enrolled in education. And all this within an enduring messiness surrounding the uncertain future of teacher education in England and what this might mean for the future of educational research.

Within this context we are extremely proud of the increasing web-based presence of the periodical. Overall online access for the five *RiTE* editions so far equates to greater than 8,000 page views, with over 1,400 visits since the last edition. International readership continues to expand, with 85 different countries having accessed our web pages. India and the USA are providing the highest circulation statistics outside of UK access, but clear curiosity (beyond European interest) is also being generated in Australia, Canada, Pakistan and Malaysia. *RiTE*'s

strong presence in UEL's Research Open Access Repository (ROAR) is reflected in the 439 ROAR downloads of articles between November 2012 and August 2013. Since we started tracking the data in January of this year, there have been 504 downloads of articles via the periodical's website. These are impressive figures and we thank people for the interest they are continually showing in the articles and book reviews found in the journal.

Further exciting improvements in our social media usage can also be seen thanks to our colleague **Daniel Ayres**. We currently have over 120 Twitter (@UEL_RiTE) followers – including distinguished international academics and academic institutions – and we have experienced to date over 150 referrals to the online journal from this Twitter account. These are still early very early days in the life of this fledgling publication and there is much work to do but your contributions reach a global audience and the editorial team thank you for your interest and contribution. Mindful of that global audience we now invite colleagues working in schools to send in examples of school-led research that they feel might be of interest to the readership of this periodical.

We begin this issue with an article by **Carrie Weston, Andy Minnion, Gosia Kwiatkowska** and **Elena Guardini**. Their research focuses on the development of students' professional confidence, personal skills and subject-related understanding in the context of considering the values and benefits of student volunteering. **Warren Kidd** explores the tensions and ambiguities for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) situated within the lifelong learning or further education (FE) context in the UK. In doing so his discussion focuses upon the policy context shaping the lived experience of teachers, trainee teachers and teacher educators (micro) in

the FE system and how these policy narratives are 'worked out' in the day-to-day pedagogic practice of teacher education. **Kulvarn Atwal** examines theories of workplace learning in terms of factors that inhibit or support the learning of teachers in primary schools. In his article Kulvarn details how the possibilities for learning at work depend upon the interrelationship between individual worker dispositions, the affordance of the workplace to provide a restrictive or expansive learning environment, and the influence and direction of government policy. Bilingual education has been a very controversial issue in the last decade in Colombia because national laws now aim at fostering English-Spanish bilingualism.

Sandra Ximena Bonilla Medina and **Ferney Cruz Arcila** raise awareness over critical sociocultural factors involved in the teaching of English in rural areas of Colombia to understand the complexity of teachers' professional development considering the particularities of their local work settings. **Margaret Etherington** brings to our attention that gender disparity in the take-up of post-compulsory school art, leading to the predominance of girls at GCSE and A-level, appears to be linked to the perception that the subject offers few career prospects, and to the notion that boys dislike drawing and painting. Her paper derives from a case study of a London secondary school art department during 2010/11. Alan Weller explores the use of Web 2.0 technology in pre-service teachers' professional learning. Student teachers' work is discussed in relation to current trends and practices surrounding the use of mobile/tablet devices for learning and teaching.

Our guest writer, **Michael Fielding**, is Emeritus Professor of Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, and Visiting Professor of Education at the University of Bristol. Michael taught for 19 years in some of the UK's pioneer radical secondary comprehensive schools and for a similar period and with identical commitments at the universities of Cambridge, London and Sussex. Widely published in the fields of student voice, educational leadership and radical democratic education, some of his innovative research work

(he coined the term Joint Practice Development) is currently influencing professional learning in schools. Within the context of a powerful critique on the effects of transnational capitalism on education, Michael discusses the pioneering work of Alex Bloom and its implications for radical democratic education.

This number's book reviews are provided by **Fran Paffard**, **Julie Gariazzo** and **Sheeba Viswarajan**. Our guest reviewer is **Stephen Newman**, a Senior Lecturer in Education and Continuing Professional Development at Leeds Metropolitan University. Stephen's main interests include the relationship between theory and practice, reflective practice, teacher education, and the application of philosophy to issues of educational importance, including teacher education. Dr Newman is an academic referee for two international education journals.

As always we hope that you enjoy the collection of articles in this issue of the periodical. It is with great pleasure then that we announce **Professor David Wray** as our guest writer for the next (April 2014) edition of *RITE*.

Gerry Czerniawski and David Wells