Editorial

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This issue of *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability* marks yet another dual transition in the academic history of the journal as this is my final as Editor. After serving as Editor-in-Chief since 2012, I am proud and excited to hand over the duties to two leading scholars: Dr. Guri Skedsmo (University of Oslo, Norway and University of Teacher Education Zug, Switzerland) and Professor Stephan Gerhard Huber (University of Teacher Education Zug, Switzerland). The second imminent transition for the journal is geographical. The editorial transition will also foster a new physical home as EAEA travels from its current home at UCL Institute of Education in London, UK, to a more easterly joint European home between Norway and Switzerland.

Within this period of change and global mobility for EAEA, the articles within this issue reinforce and speak to the core mission of the journal as an outlet for cutting-edge, global and policy-relevant research. Spanning from Singapore to Ireland and exploring topics from quality education, inspection and student benchmarking, this issue closes the volume and provides much food for thought. Without further ado, it is my honour to introduce, for the last time, the four papers contained within this issue.

Ng opens the issue with a Singapore-focused study of how leaders view the practices and outcomes of quality education entitled: *What is quality education? How can it be achieved? The perspectives of school middle leaders in Singapore*. Ng finds that leaders hold a holistic picture of quality education that focuses on students' learning and developing attitudes, values and aspirations that will equip them for their futures. The importance of good teaching and teachers, linked with enabling school and classroom-level environments, is highlighted. Policy-level recommendations, based on the findings, are made and will be of interest for those intrigued by education policy, practice and research in Singapore and beyond.

In our second paper, Timmermans, de Wolf, Bosker and Doolaard present their research on school-level inspections within primary schools entitled *Risk-based*

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educational accountability in Dutch primary education. The study explores a more recently adopted risk-based approach to school inspection in which school inspections may target schools with varying frequency and intensity depending on preliminary evidence of risk. The paper examines the characteristics associated with successful prediction of risk and potential underperformance including below average final achievement and/or below average value added; school composition; previous underperformance, insufficient judgments on having a systematic evaluation approach, evaluation of support and monitoring student performance. The authors provide insight into the merit and challenges of risk-based accountability and highlight potential efficiencies.

The third paper, *Implementing benchmark testing for formative purposes: teacher voices about what works*, by Abrams, McMillan and Wetzel returns us to the USA to examine teacher views on periodic or benchmark assessments as tools to improve instruction and student achievement. The authors conducted 15 focus group with 67 elementary and middle school teachers to improve our understanding of how benchmarking test can enhance formative assessment. The authors suggest that in the right context and under specific conditions, benchmark testing programmes have the potential of providing meaningful formative assessment.

O'Brien, McNamara and O'Hara present our final paper, *Supporting the consistent implementation of self-evaluation in Irish post-primary schools*. The paper outlines the changing nature of self-evaluation in the Irish context. The authors present the historical evolution of the process from 2003 to 2012 highlighting the improvements in the overall strategy while noting concerns related to school capacity and available support. The research serving as the focus of the paper examines factors that support implementation including facilitator-led approach, addressing the practicalities of implementation, and the national monitoring system. The findings have relevance both within Ireland and beyond and raise important questions around the strategy and implementation of self-evaluation.

Bringing together each issue and volume is a collective effort. I would like to thank the Editorial Board, our tireless reviewers and our amazing team at Springer Publishing responsible for our on-going leadership and operational support: Yoka Janssen, AnneMarie Keur, Jurgen Torres-Ventula and Astrid Noordermeer. I would like to give a very special thank you to our outstanding Editorial Assistant for EAEA Eduard Sarmiento, without whom, we would not be able to work as efficiently or enthusiastically. His careful eye, attention to detail and ability to keep the editorial process rolling have been constant throughout my time as Editor. I will always be thankful for the collaboration we forged as a team.

Four years ago, when I took the helm of the journal, I was a relatively new parent to a wonderful, interesting and challenging almost 2-year-old boy, Isaac. Since that time, I cannot count how many times I was asked how it was possible to be an Editor, an academic with an international research practice and a parent. My answer, every time, was you just make it happen. It is not juggling or struggling. It is academic life. And, with all lives, time has flown by. Now, as I hand over EAEA to the new editors, I am the mum of an amazing 5-year-old boy. Two months ago, Isaac started primary school. It is lovely to watch him thrive at school, make new friends and fiercely get in the way of our ability to spell things 'behind his back' in the house due to his passion for learning how to read and spell!

Isaac approaches almost everyday with the wonderment and enthusiasm for learning that reminds me why so many of our authors, readers and reviewers work tirelessly to examine and understand so many different facets of our respective education systems. I strongly believe that all of our work demonstrates our collective commitment, in our own small way, to contributing to the betterment of teaching and learning for all students. My time as Editor-in-Chief was one of my small contributions to supporting the nurturing of the evidence base to support Isaac and his future teachers and leaders in creating the best education systems we can for all children.

More personally, I want to thank Isaac for his constant inspiration, love of learning, passion for asking great questions and willingness to have ‘man-time’ with his dad while I spend the occasional Sunday tending to Editorial duties. Finally, as my partner is a grade 5 primary school teacher in inner London, our lives often revolve around his school and his students. For the last several years, they have also often revolved around EAEA. I want to thank Arul for his support, patience and willingness to be the lead parent when duty called.

EAEA brings together the work of academics, policy makers and professionals on both sides of the research equation. The journal will continue to leap from strength to strength with a new set of lenses on the role and scope of the journal. I look forward to watching it grow and succeed from the other side of the Editorial desk and wish the new Editors-in-Chief well in their own editorial adventures. I know that under their guidance, EAEA will continue to publish outstanding international research that explores the pressing educational issue facing our systems locally, nationally and internationally.