Editor's introduction

Deborah J. Henderson¹

Published online: 18 September 2020

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As this edition of *Curriculum Perspectives* goes to press, we continue to experience considerable change and uncertainty in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is critical that educational developments in the face of the pandemic and other socio-political issues, such as the Black Lives Matter movement, and longstanding concerns about climate change and sustainability, should be informed by deep and meaningful curriculum thinking.

Neil Hooley's thought-provoking exploration of the significance of philosophy and its application for social and educational practitioners, is the first paper in this edition. Hooley challenges us to think about philosophy as a social practice and how it can be experienced through curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. In developing his argument, Hooley reminds us of some of the key ideas arising from the history of Greek philosophy prior to considering the significance of American Pragmatism for schooling today. In doing so, Hooley challenges us to oppose neoliberal economic assumptions about what education is for. Concomitantly, he offers a philosophical model and approach to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment that fundamentally redirects the purpose of education for all children regardless of socio-economic background.

In the next paper, Armend Tahirsylaj and Daniel Sundberg, present their systematic review based on eighty-four articles on educational research that focused on competence-based education (CBE) and curricula from 1997 to 2017. Amongst other findings, the authors identified four sources of competence definitions: OECD/DeSeCo, European Commission, national policy documents and the academic literature. Tahirsylaj and Sundberg conclude that there is unfinished business for educational researchers in critically engaging with framing and defining competences for the twenty-first century, their causes, impact and consequences for schooling

and learning internationally, as well as how CBE is recontextualised into specific national contexts.

Lovemore Sibanda and Sylvan Blignaut share their findings from research into the implementation of a new Ordinary History curriculum in Zimbabwe in the third paper in this edition. Hailed as an educational flagship to effect transformational ideas of equality, freedom, national consciousness, and improved learning outcomes in the curriculum, the authors found that the new Ordinary Level History curriculum is not being implemented fully as intended. Instead, Sibanda and Blignaut posit that many teachers were adapting the new History curriculum to suit their traditional ways of teaching.

In their paper, Muji Setiyo, Budi Waluyo, Ari Suryawan, Mochamad Bruri Triyono and Dewi Eka Murniati draw from their research in Vocational Higher Education (VHE) curriculum development in Indonesia. The authors argue that despite the introduction of national standards in higher education and efforts to revitalize and improve curriculum offerings, some curriculum providers in VHE have struggled to understand the guidelines for this process and link study materials with the desired learning outcomes. In response to this issue, the authors offer an alternate model to foster meaningful learning outcomes in VHE.

The next two papers in this edition focus on some specific aspects of curriculum matters in relation to pre-service teacher education in Australia. Steven Norton and Jeanne Allen report on the findings of a mixed-methods study that investigated pre-service teachers' perceptions about an attempt to prepare them to teach mathematics to primary aged children. Contextualised in an Australian initial teacher education program, the study found that pre-service teachers overwhelmingly valued the modelling of specific pedagogies and scaffolding of the teaching and learning of school mathematics concepts. Norton and Allen suggest that the results have implications for the teaching of mathematics in initial teacher education programs, particularly in Australia and elsewhere where there is an increasing emphasis on pre-service teachers being classroom ready at graduation.

Margaret Lloyd and Vinesh Chandra sharing the findings of a qualitative study into pre-service teachers' understanding

✉ Deborah J. Henderson
dj.henderson@qut.edu.au

¹ School of Teacher Education and Leadership, Queensland University of Technology, Kelvin Grove, QLD, Australia

of coding and computational thinking together with their perceptions of the connections between these concepts and the Australian Curriculum. The authors' analysis found that the participating pre-service teachers had a sound, albeit unique, knowledge of coding and computational thinking. Another finding was that pre-service teacher perceptions of how these concepts related to the Australian Curriculum demonstrated a trajectory of understanding that was highly likely to develop and mature as they were transferred to classroom settings. The paper concludes by acknowledging the newness of teaching coding and computational thinking and suggests that time and support are needed for pre-service teachers' current perceptions and understandings to be consolidated in future teaching practice.

Over the past decade, *Curriculum Perspectives* has published a range of papers about the strengths and weaknesses of the Australian Curriculum's tripartite structure of learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. By way of contributing to this curriculum scholarship, the paper in the Australian Curriculum section of this edition, addresses the question of the curriculum's architecture by focusing on the cross-curriculum priorities. As this paper is a revised version of a chapter in *The Australian Curriculum: Promises, Problems and Possibilities* (Reid and Price 2018), it serves as 'taster' for the ACSA publication.¹ Currently, the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACARA) is undertaking a review of the F-10 Australian Curriculum. In the official communique of the decision on 12 June 2020, ministers indicated the review is "an important step forward in addressing an overcrowded curriculum and in lifting Australia's performance in literacy, numeracy and science" (Education Council 2020, p. 2). The review is guided by an agreement to preserve the existing three dimensions of the Australian Curriculum - the eight discipline-based learning areas, seven general capabilities and three cross-curriculum priorities as described in *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* Version 5.0 (ACARA 2020). It remains to be seen

how the cross-curriculum priorities are reshaped as a result of the review process.

The Point and Counterpoint section focuses on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education, and has been expertly guest edited by Associate Professor Judy Anderson. I am indebted to Judy, who is also an Associate Editor for the journal, in curating these papers. Collectively, the papers enhance our understanding of what is possible for STEM education. They highlight some approaches to designing and implementing integrated STEM curriculum, offer insights into how schools might address connected STEM curriculum, and discuss some of the challenges for teachers in determining what STEM curriculum might look.

As the final paper in this edition of the journal, Senka Henderson reviews Azra Moeed and Dayle Anderson's (2018) work, *Learning Through School Science Investigation: Teachers Putting Research into Practice*. This book draws from the authors' two-year classroom research project funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Education Teaching and Learning Initiative.

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¹ Ibid.