

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the final issue of the Australian and International Journal of Rural Education for 2013. We commence with an article from Sue Wilson (Australian Catholic University) who very nicely juxtaposes issues of rurality with success or otherwise in mathematics and the impact for teacher education students who experience maths anxiety. The paper reports on an investigation of anxieties experienced by first year PST feel - towards mathematics, and ways that they might change the way they approach their mathematics studies, their affective responses to mathematics and engagement with mathematics in their university mathematics units, comparing rural and metropolitan students' responses. The author identifies the need for ongoing research focussing on the factors contributing to anxiety of rural students and their retention in teacher education programs.

The second article, by Boris Handal (The University of Notre Dame Australia), Kevin Watson (The University of Notre Dame Australia), Peter Petocz (Macquarie University) and Marguerite Maher (The University of Notre Dame Australia), explores in depth the issues related to attraction and retention of secondary teachers in rural and remote schools. Their mixed method analysis examines the raft of problematics associated with providing high quality curriculum in these schools in a time when the sector and the profession are under continued stress. Professional and geographical "isolation" as well as extra-curricular demands are identified as concerns for experienced and inexperienced teachers. Personal issues are not overlooked as the researchers attempt to capture the nuances of the "lived" experiences of these teachers. The authors provide some potential solutions to their findings.

Our third article, written by Chris Reading, Myung-Sook Auh, John Pegg and Peter Cybula, all of whom are from the University of New England, discusses a very interesting project connecting Australian students in rural and remote schools with students in Korea, using videoconferencing technologies. Within the context of the emerging new Australian Curriculum and its demands for *Asia and Australian Engagement*, the study and ensuing paper provide support for teachers wanting to engage with Asia in such an interactive manner. The researchers involved student feedback, lesson observations, teacher and parent/care giver interviews and used a previously created rubric to analyse lesson quality. Analysis of data from lessons between four pairs of schools provides insight into a range of pedagogical and technological advice to assist teachers to improve the quality of their future use of videoconferencing to connect students and allow them to explore new cultural horizons. The paper outlines the specific benefits to students in rural and remote locations, as these students typically have limited opportunities to interact with students from diverse cultures. Teachers are encouraged to consider the possibilities for their own students.

In the next paper, Barbara Barter (Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada) presents the successes and challenges of three very different technological approaches to delivering learning opportunities in the Canadian context. The projects and analysis may assist educators to identify and define theoretical aspects of technology leadership and hence lead to further understandings about how users may experience its implementation and use. The paper presents a somewhat bleak view of what is potentially a very positive aspect of curriculum development and delivery for rural and remote schools. Principally the issues appear to stem from practical rather than pedagogical problems, which place the responsibility squarely at the feet of educational administrators. Clearly, further work needs to be done to support the implementation of these interactive teaching models in Canadian schools. Barter argues that social interaction, depth of relationship, professional community building, and trust are not built into technology.

As Australia experiences a growth in the proportion of the population in the "older" age group, Bronwyn Ellis (University of South Australia) draws our attention to "learning needs" of students over 55 years of age. The article argues that in a just, inclusive society all groups within it, including older people resident in more remote areas, should have access to lifelong learning opportunities, including both non-formal continuing education and formal higher education. The paper reports on

the value for not only mature-aged students, but students of all ages from working in intergenerational cohorts and provides insights to universities for potential strategies to facilitate opportunities for mature-aged students, particularly in terms of the needs of more remote students.

In a similar vein to the previous article, Joy Penman and Janet Sawyer, from the University of South Australia, describe the success of a program (UniReady) designed to attract non-traditional students, in this case recent arrival migrants students to higher education in a regional university. This paper provides an exploration of the initial pilot session - its organisation, immediate impact, and its implications. While this was a small study it does highlight the potential of programs that assist students to take that very first tentative step into the world of higher education, and importantly that programs must recognise the different cultures of potential participants, what they individually can bring to tertiary education and the myriad of barriers they each face in attempting to do so.

In an engaging article, Wigati Yektiningtyas-Modouw (Cenderwerawasih University, Papua) and Sri Karna (UNICEF, Papua) bring to life the difficulties and possibilities for literacy learning in Papua and West Papuan schools. The article explores a specific local literacy project and its broader implications for improving rural/remote literacy programs. Through the development of locally written and beautifully illustrated books educators take the first step in developing little children's literacy in their own language. The paper reviews the current parlous state of literacy in the region and makes recommendation for how a more culturally and contextually appropriate literacy programme, using the skills of folklorists, can be a key strategies to strengthen rural and remote Papuan literacy program as a fundamental requisite for quality primary education.

Jae Major, Jane Wilkinson, Kip Langat (all from Charles Sturt University) and Ninetta Santoro (University of Strathclyde, Scotland) highlight the importance of valuing qualities and capacities for self-determination of new Australians, and in this case young Sudanese refugees in a large regional centre when addressing educational outcomes. The historical "location" of humanitarian refugees is outlined, giving strong contextual framing to the paper, which makes excellent reading. The paper argues these young people (and their families) bring significant resources and capital that contribute to their ability to build a new life in Australian communities. If educators recognise and draw on these resources and capital in education settings there is potential for greater education achievement for young people of refugee background. Theories of capital, in particular social capital, were used in the study described here to explore and understand the out-of-school resources that Sudanese refugee young people draw on that may support educational achievement. The paper argues that there are key factors of family, friends, church, sport, the regional location and community, and school which enable different forms of social capital to be activated. The authors argue that with an injection of resources for teacher professional development to enable teachers to develop a curriculum and pedagogical practices schools responsive to these learners' attributes and to create a culture that represents refugees in positive and empowering ways.

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