

## **EDITORIAL**

One of the most talked about themes in the history of education is the need for improvement and change. The drive for educational improvements and change in Malaysia have raised important questions pertaining to emerging and competing paradigms and programs of research on teaching, teacher learning, and teaching and learning in various subject matters. However, teacher educators are situated as ‘frontliners’ to work together with educational stakeholders to improve teacher education, teaching, and learning with bold, fresh, creative and empirically sound concepts, strategies and outlooks – all imperative for understanding the challenges and developing useful solutions towards educational improvement and change. Motivated by these common understandings, this issue brings together experienced scholars in the education arena to share their ideas drawn from personal understandings of their specialisation and research.

The first article by Keith Wood reports on the growth of the World Association of Lesson Studies (WALS) and the international dialogue that it sustains. In particular, it outlines the features of Learning Study; a hybrid version of Lesson Study developed through a sustained East – West dialogue of more than a decade, and refers the reader to some of the key publications that have contributed to it. The Variation Theory used in Learning Study explains the conditions necessary for the design of effective learning situations.

Still on student learning, Tee Tze Kiong, Jailani Md Yunos, Razali Hassan, Yee Mei Heong, Atan Hj. Hussein, and Mimi Mohaffyza Mohamad highlight the importance of students possessing higher order thinking skills. The authors contend that students with higher order thinking skills are able to compete better in the challenging world they live in. However, their study shows that higher order thinking skills levels among students are at very low level. The article continued with the authors proposing a new approach which uses a specialised instructional module for individualised learning to encourage thinking skills.

Eftah Moh @ Hj Abdullah, Othman Lebar, and Abd. Aziz Abd. Shukor studied the effects of Performance-based Assessment to enhance teaching and learning of Science of secondary school students. In this quasi experiment study, four classes of Form One students participated in a five weeks intervention program designed to enhance teaching and learning of science with the Performance-based Assessment to Enhance Teaching and Learning Science (ForPS) Model. Intervention groups demonstrated significant improvements on some dimensions of performance as measured by the Integrated Science Process

Skills and Science Concepts Understanding, whereas control groups exhibited no significance change. Implications for practice were discussed.

Also on the topic of teaching and learning, Jane Teng Yan Fang and Chang Lee Hoon examine selected schools' experiences on SUHAKAM's best practices in Human Rights (ATHAM) program. The aim of the authors' study is to highlight the best practices of human rights program as experienced by the teachers and students. The views of teachers and students are expressed in terms of the importance of ATHAM objectives, challenges and ways to overcome the challenges.

Suppiah Nachiappan, Hari Krishnan Andi, and Velayudhan P. K. Veeran draw our attention to the importance of the three types of intelligence that should be possessed by a teacher to encourage quality performance in teaching. They are the Cognitive integration of Intellectual Intelligence (IQ), Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and Spiritual Intelligence (SQ). Combination of these three elements encourages the success of a teacher towards being a capable educator, not only in the classroom and the surrounding school environment, but also at wherever the teacher is situated.

On a lighter note, the final article has Ang Thiah Huat and Andrew Blackburn deliberate upon the synergy language and music play in society. The authors argue that there are semiotic elements of music which, like language, help bind social groups together with joint symbols - songs and anthems. Interestingly, the authors write that in music, many of the perceptions and changes are being driven by developments in technology - from how the music we listen to is being created, composed and conceived, to the media through which we access the music itself - a shift from halls, parlours, rituals and village celebrations to cd's, dvd's and mp3 files on more and more miniaturized devices. The article looks at this changes and how these changes are also changing the nature of the language of music itself.

In addition to the six articles, this issue also offers a book review of *Teachers as Learners: Critical Discourse on Challenges & Opportunities*, edited by Ora Kwo. The review is undertaken by Gabor Halasz from ELTE University Budapest.

Into its 3<sup>rd</sup> issue, JRPPTTE remains a platform where innovative ideas for the improvement and change in teaching and teacher education are proposed, debated and researched from different teacher education fields. Nevertheless, the journal recognises that many disciplines - psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, political sciences, history, music, and philosophy- have important contributions to make and the editors welcome contributions from them.

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