

EDITORIAL

Teacher education today requires greater strategic planning and collaboration, both within teacher education and in partnerships with teachers and schools. Such endeavours require new competencies – both for the preservice teachers and teacher educators. Researchers have commented that there is a gap between what beginning teachers require in their practice and what teacher education prepares them. With the advent of technology, digital competence appears to be an area that also need more focus and interpretation. This issue of the Journal of Research, Policy & Practice of Teachers & Teacher Education looks at all these issues and discusses examples of some of the important steps we need to take through research-based knowledge within teacher education.

The first article by Ikhsan Othman and Norila Md Salleh investigated the relationship between preservice teachers' achievement in courses taken in the campus and their actual achievement in teaching in schools. The survey of over 1,500 preservice teachers showed correlation between achievement in only some of the courses taken at the university and their teaching practices. However, interviews of the same preservice teachers indicated otherwise. This conflict required further examination to bridge the theory into practice gap of teacher education. Following this, the second article by Lim Hooi Lian, Wun Thiam Yew and Chew Cheng Meng provided insights into reasons why preservice teachers' lacked knowledge in choosing the appropriate method of assessments and why they faced difficulties and challenges in selecting or adopting assessment tasks. The authors' findings showed that much is still needed to assist preservice teachers in their knowledge of developing assessment task and selecting assessment methods.

Still on the important areas of preparing preservice teachers, the third article by Wong Yeou Min, Rosnidar Mansor and Syakirah Samsudin, studied the levels of reflection among preservice teachers during their practicum. The authors used the Van Manen's three stage model to determine the level of reflection based on preservice teachers' own reflective notes which they wrote after each teaching session. Lack of critical reflection among preservice teachers suggested the need for teacher educators to reconsider preparing preservice teachers with the techniques of reflective practices that might foster better reflective practices. Thus, if critical reflection is to be taken seriously, it is important to provide guidance or structured approach for preservice teachers to develop deep levels of reflection during teaching practices.

In the fourth article, Halimah Abdul Majid, Chuah Beng Ean and Eow Yee Leng concerned themselves with the professional development of in-service teachers. The authors advocated the continuous process of learning and renewal of practices in the teaching profession. They investigated the learning processes using the exemplar of a group of in-service teachers from a school in Putrajaya. Their findings showed that continuous professional development was much needed by all teachers, including veteran and experienced teachers.

The fifth article revolved around the important learning needs of students in schools. Roszelina Abd Rahman and Maria Salih set out to identify and explain matriculation college science student's mental models generated from self-visualisation of the concept of the carbon cycle. Five students were purposively sampled and the study was carried out in a naturalistic setting. Findings showed two patterns of mental models; namely

pictorial and graphical mental models. These students visualised themselves from their own experience and made relationships to their prior and new knowledge.

A study by P. Seneviratne from the Open University of Sri Lanka make up the sixth article. His study explores the strategies adopted by preschool teachers in promoting pro-social behavior among preschool children. The findings indicate that preschool teachers of Sri Lanka take action to promote pro-social behavior among children through their classroom activities such as sharing, helping each other, encouraging pro-social behavior and collaborative activities.

The seventh article of the journal is in *Bahasa Melayu* (Malay Language). Mahizer Hamzah and Mohd Azli Yeop look at the use of the Frog-Virtual Learning Environment (Frog VLE) which is a blended learning platform initiated by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia for schools. The authors find that, generally, the use of Frog VLE is quite well accepted by teachers in schools. Nevertheless, it is suggested by the authors that there is a wide range of interpretations of what digital competence among teachers should be. In order to utilize the range of different technologies pedagogically and increase teaching quality among teachers towards the use of Frog VLE, the development of professional digital competence seems to be an important condition.

We continuously seek manuscripts that link research to practice, with an objective towards improving pre-service and in-service teacher education, therefore, we look forward to receiving your articles for the June 2017 issue. As always, we extend our sincere appreciation to all our contributors, reviewers and technical personnel who made this issue a success.

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