

Editorial

Doctoral researchers may undertake the process of doctoral research training and individual research for a variety of reasons: for personal satisfaction, out of intellectual curiosity, from a desire to understand something noticed or observed or for more pragmatic professional development reasons. In setting out on the research journey, a theme explored in the special section of this issue in the commentary paper by Denise Batchelor and Roberto Di Napoli, there is an implicit commitment to report back to those not undertaking the same journey and those only recently embarked on a different journey. This 'reporting back' may be targeted at those whose funding support allowed the journey to be undertaken in the first place or it may be to those working in the same or related fields of enquiry or to those who might be able to make use of what has been found in particular professional contexts.

Three specific forms of 'reporting back' have been employed in Educate~ since its founding in 2001 as a printed journal; each has reflected a particular phase of the doctoral research process. The first has been the *research note* detailing the initial steps being undertaken in a piece of research, particularly the outcomes of pilot studies and how these might inform an author's main research or, as in the current issue, where conceptual frameworks relating to a particular project are established as in the research note by Masaki Abe. Second, a *critical review* reflecting an overview of the literature relating to particular research questions and a third type of paper aimed at giving a full account of gathered 'data', where the data might be qualitative or quantitative, including its analysis and interpretation. Third is the *research paper*, which may involve the analysis of data or, as in the case of the paper by Tristan McCowan, a critical analysis and investigation of the work of two theorists in relation to a particular issue or question.

The advent of the on-line version of the journal, a prospect anticipated at the journal's inception, has allowed the Editorial Board to offer contributors new ways of presenting and disseminating their research findings. Different types of 'paper', building on the existing research note, critical review and research paper already available, are now on offer. For example, 'discussion papers' where the focus is on presenting multiple sides of an argument or issue and evaluating the issues raised. These would be particularly useful for issues that cross existing discipline boundaries or perspectives as may be seen in the papers in the special issue section of this online issue. 'Commentary' type papers, such as that by Denise Batchelor and Roberto Di Napoli, mentioned earlier, allow different perspectives to be reported and unified in a common dialogue to explore a particular issue of theory or practice. Equally, specifically dialogic papers reflecting conversations between authors from different perspectives, within or across different fields where ideas are exchanged and evaluated on a common topic are now possible – either as print based texts or through recorded discussion distributed by podcasts. A specific form of this type of paper is where two or more authors combine their individual knowledge of particular contexts to present a comparative account crossing cultural or geographical settings as in the paper by Ann Carroll-Boegh and Hiroyuki Takagi.

Book reviews offer another way of reporting back from a 'research' journey, in this case in the reading and critical examination of particular texts. Judy Hemingway does just this in the current issue by reviewing two apparently different texts and using the review process to both explore the texts themselves and to draw upon them for insights into broader thematic issues.

Having Educate~ as an online entity has also allowed the Editorial Board to offer contributors the opportunity to present data in ways not possible in the previous print editions; either because it would have been too expensive, as in the case of using colour photographs or drawings or where moving-image based data was involved. It is now possible for research

involving data of these types to be presented for readers. A step in this direction is apparent in the colour images reported in the research paper by Andrea Creech and Susan Hallam.

The editors look forward to receiving submissions that involve other forms of data where the opportunity to see moving images or hear audio data can inform our readers evaluation of the accounts presented in the papers they access. We wish to explore the flexibility and opportunities for communication offered by these new formats whilst retaining high standards of peer reviewed commentary and evaluation. Our review process still involves each article being reviewed by an established academic and a current doctoral researcher, both working in the same or related field, as well as an overall review by the Editorial Board as a whole. We are still committed to our initial desire to involve new reviewers and editors in the editorial process, though the provision of specific training for both activities.

Educate~ started as a journal based around the research work of postgraduate researchers at the Institute of Education at the University of London. It has now been launched as a national and international journal reflecting the increasingly globalized nature of modern research activity. The diverse, eclectic and multinational origin of the research undertaken at the Institute continues and in its diversity, represents a fundamental strength of the Institute itself as a centre of world-class research. It also reflects its commitment to the production and dissemination of research across national and cultural boundaries.

In seeking to communicate the range and extent of this doctoral research, we are publishing for the first time, the abstracts of papers being presented at the Institutes' Summer Doctoral Research Conference, one of the two conferences dedicated to this purpose undertaken each year by the Doctoral School at the Institute. We also hope to be disseminating the abstracts of research presented at other doctoral research conferences and symposia across the field of education and education related research by other universities. Our publication of research abstracts of papers presented at the recent *Kaleidoscope: 3rd Postgraduate Symposium in Education* at the University of Cambridge is an example of this development.

Moving from a print based journal to one with an on-line presence has involved the hard work of many people and in particular that of the current *Educate~* development team – their hard work and that of those who have supported the actual uploading and editing of the various contributions is gratefully acknowledged.

We look forward, as we said in our first issue in 2001, to "...the continuing willingness of potential contributors to provide us with interesting, thought-provoking and engaging material." For those readers who are currently undertaking doctoral research we look forward to receiving your contributions; and in supporting you, as doctoral researchers, in the publication, dissemination and dialogue building that lies at the heart of the research process.

The Editorial Board
June 2006
London