

Editorial

Professor Ruth Wallace

Northern Institute, Charles Darwin University

ruth.wallace@cdu.edu.au

Welcome to the twenty-fourth edition of *Learning Communities* for 2019. After several special issues over the years, I am pleased to be able to present our first open issue.

This issue covers a range of topics from VET policy, Indigenous education, Indigenous perspective, Yolŋu cosmology, impact of weather on perinatal outcomes, and 'special' education policymaking.

In an opening article, ***“The changing balances of equity, control and market choice in the Indigenous vocational education and training sector”***, Don Zoellner and Anne Stephens discuss VET policy and associated changes impacting on the delivery of VET to Indigenous Australians over the past 40 years. Based on review and research of reports and articles on equity, VET and their relevance to Indigenous Australians since the introduction of the Technical and Further Education system in the mid-1970s. Zoellner and Stephens address how the changing priorities in training policy have perpetuated inequity of access and benefit from vocational education and training, contrary to the original conception of a national post-secondary technical and further education system for Australia.

Gregory Smith & Michael Michie’s ***“Towards an understanding of Indigenous perspectives through the eyes of pre-service science education students”*** presents an analysis of 'Indigenous perspectives' as presented by pre-service teachers of science education using network visualisation, concept maps or mind maps. The connections between Western science knowledge, Indigenous knowledge and knowledge application elements of the visualisations represent student constructed understandings or perceptions. Smith and Michie findings demonstrated network analysis presented Indigenous perspective as a complex web of interrelated Western school science and Indigenous knowledges and may provide the possibility for a reconceptualisation of Australian Science curriculum.

'Two-way' teaching and learning is a summary expression for a diverse pedagogical approaches and has a long history in the Northern Territory in relation to remote Indigenous education. The third article, ***“Too many ‘two-ways’? ‘Gäwa is a two-way school’: clarifying approaches to remote Northern Territory Indigenous education”*** by Ben van Gelderen presents qualitative research from the Yolŋu 'homeland' community at Gäwa in north-east Arnhem Land as Indigenous first-language case-study. In his article, van Gelderen clarifies the various 'two way' approaches by comparing current community aspirations with historical policies and applications of 'two-way' terms across the Northern Territory, such as Indigenous perspectives, Indigenous learning-style, team-teaching, bilingual education, 'bothways' education and domain separation.

Cosmology is a very broad concept, covering the origin of all matters and their inherent properties and relationships. The article by Ben van Gelderen et al., ***“Warramiri Yolŋu cosmology: an introduction”***, explores Indigenous cosmological theories and practices. Focusing on the relationship of Aboriginal cosmologies and public policy, the metaphysical realm of definitions, interacting with systems of ontology, epistemology and axiology. It highlights local perspectives and narratives from the homeland community at Gäwa, as well as emphasizing on the commitment to transdisciplinary, generative and 'both-ways' research methodologies in Yolŋu communities.

The fifth article, ***“Discursive mélange and multiple dilemmas: navigating New South Wales ‘special’ education policymaking”*** by Jessica Chong examines some of the challenges observed when there is a call for more inclusion and neo-liberal reform within NSW educational policymaking. Chong aimed to deconstruct the complexities involved in the process of 'special' education policymaking in NSW with a focus on departmental challenges and the dynamics of external influences. The article argues the Australian government has supported school marketization and a strategic performance-based reward

system that has widened the social divide instead of mitigating the influence of students' background on educational outcomes.

The sixth and last article in this open edition provide a change of scenery. Remote arid Australian towns are homes to many Indigenous women who prefer an outdoor lifestyle and have poor perinatal outcomes. The article by Supriya Mathew et al., "**Midwife observations on the impact of hot weather on poor perinatal outcomes in central Australia: a qualitative study**", reports midwives' observations on the effects of hot weather on poor perinatal outcomes in a central Australian town. It discussed quantitative analysis of preterm birth and temperature data indicating higher risks to preterm births among Indigenous women in central Australia. The article highlights the importance of cultural training for midwives and their role in alerting pregnant women to take precautionary measures during summer periods.

I hope the articles in this issue deliver interesting, insightful research and findings to our readers. Perhaps it motivates further discussion on the topics. I hope you enjoy reading them.

Lastly, I would like to thank the contributors and those who had assisted in the production of this issue and their patience as we brought the issue to press.