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Issue 4(1): Prism Guest editor(s)

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John Goulding – LJMU

Mireille Patrick – LJMU

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Michael Thomas: Editorial

Professor Michael Thomas, (LJMU)

John Goulding, (LJMU)

Mireille Patrick (LJMU)

PRISM 4(1): March 2022 – Editorial

Pages: 1-3

This special edition of *PRISM* brings together seven papers authored by postgraduate research students arising from the 1st International Doctoral Research Conference in Education hosted by the Centre for Educational Research (CERES) at Liverpool John Moores University on 8th July 2020. Over 500 participants registered for this fully online event delivered via videoconferencing from over 17 different countries, just as the first of our several lockdowns were occurring throughout the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rhody-Ann Thorpe: [The Idea of a Post-Colonial University](#)

PRISM 4(1): March 2022

Pages: 4-14

Abstract:

Universities in the English-speaking world may trace their origins to England, where the first universities of Oxford and Cambridge were established. These universities were, for centuries, the models for universities to come both in terms of structure and philosophy; and they also became a tool of British colonial policy. With the progression of British expansionism, many English men penned their ideas of a university; some of which were brought to fruition. In the 21st century, we have a multiplicity of independent nations which were formerly under British rule. While in most societies there was a phasing out of colonial institutions, many universities established during the colonial epoch seem to have withstood the test of time. It would be interesting therefore to assess some of these institutions and their evolutions in a broader endeavour to examine developments in higher education in societies post-independence. What conversations were had prior to independence regarding higher education? What ideas of a post-colonial university prevailed and what ideas should have been put forth? Were there shifts away from what constituted a colonial university? This paper is also an attempt to include universities in the post-colonial discourse and to propose an ideals of the university from a post-colonial perspective.

Article link:

<https://openjournals.ljmu.ac.uk/index.php/prism/article/view/441>

Juliette Clara Bertoldo: [Beyond perfection: Reclaiming death in and for education](#)

PRISM 4(1): March 2022

Pages: 15-28

Abstract:

In associating death with education, this paper explores how the death register, and in particular the denial of death, is reflected in the treatment of contemporary education, aiming to construct the future as an object of knowledge for providing certainty and authority. Through a reading of Gert Biesta's theoretical considerations, I discuss how educational systems scientifically explained and measured are created to be fixed (or healed), in pursuit of a type of education as a social apparatus to enable or reach for a perfect future. I argue however, that such medical-like treatment runs the risk of negating the complex, relational, and fragile qualities of educational life. In the second part, I offer new perspectives on death and loss to be imagined as occasions for emancipation within pedagogical encounters between subjects; giving space for unpredictability, riskiness, ambiguity, and messiness to occur. My overall contention is that when desires of immortality overpower an appreciation of the finitude and fragility of all things, a part of life is denied. When education is not confronted with important and challenging questions on its purposes, this should be considered dangerous or even lethal for a safe system to thrive; we miss out on what is educational in education, we miss an encounter with reality.

Article link:

<https://openjournals.ljmu.ac.uk/index.php/prism/article/view/413>

Nicola Robertson: [The Future of Teaching? Asimov's Three laws and the Hypothetical Robot Teacher](#)

PRISM 4(1): March 2022

Pages: 29-40

Abstract:

There is no denying that the influence and use of technology in relation to teaching and learning increased significantly during the Co-Vid-19 periods of isolation and lockdown. The screen became the classroom; the teacher (and the students), rendered as apparitions of virtuality. Nevertheless, despite the barriers of distance and screen, there remained (and indeed remains) something distinctly human about these interactions. What if the teacher on the screen – and, indeed, in the classroom – was not human? Remotely controlled robotic teachers have been trialled in China, with positive feedback from students; yet teaching remains a profession that has been deemed at low risk of automation. This paper will consider Isaac Asimov’s three laws of robotics as a foundational base for predicting the behaviour of a potential, autonomous, robot teacher; comparing the predictions in relation to behaviours deemed as necessary for the successful practice of teaching. To do this, the paper will set out the three hypothetical scenarios, in order to explore – and hopefully determine – whether a ‘robot’ could effectively carry out key teaching activities. The speculative responses to these questions will hopefully inspire further discussion and discourse.

Article link:

<https://openjournals.ljmu.ac.uk/index.php/prism/article/view/442>

Stephen Foster, Denise Whitlock, Simon Cross, & Karen Kear: [To what extent can graphical feedback from a 'rainbow diagram' help students develop coherence in their academic writing?](#)

PRISM 4(1): March 2022

Pages: 41-55

Abstract:

OpenEssayist is an automated writing evaluation system (AWE) designed to provide immediate textual and graphical feedback to students to help them improve their academic writing. One of the graphical visualisations as part of *OpenEssayist*, (named a 'rainbow diagram'), illustrates how well the key concepts within the writing are connected. The rainbow diagram element has been subjected to research by Whitlock et al., (2014), who determined that participants could identify patterns across the diagrams, identifications which corresponded to essays awarded low-grade or high-grade marks by tutors. The research reported as part of this paper is a follow-on study, developed to determine how participants might use the rainbow diagram to improve academic writing. Thirteen (n=13) PhD students were interviewed face-to-face whilst an eye-tracker recorded their gaze on a rainbow diagram produced from an example of their own writing. The current work confirms that students can use rainbow diagrams to identify content that corresponds to high-grade and low-grade work in essay writing. Building on Whitlock's research, the study also shows that the rainbow diagram can be used further, to enable students to understand coherence and structure within academic writing, and to facilitate reflection on what actions should be taken to improve their writing.

Article link:

<https://openjournals.ljmu.ac.uk/index.php/prism/article/view/415>

Anita Suleman, Philemon Chigeza, & Jo Mensigna: [A scoping review and thematic analysis of mentoring models that include leadership and school connectedness theories](#)

PRISM 4(1): March 2022

Pages: 56-71

Abstract:

Little is known about mentoring programs that focus on peer to peer mentoring as a leadership program or peer and school connectedness within Australia in the last ten years. In fact, according to Nora and Crisp (2016), 'research in the last 15 years on assessing mentoring programs was mainly focused on the academic success of students' (p. 339). Given the limited reviews addressing the leadership and school connectedness factors in Australia, the objective was to understand the scope of published literature, identify evidence gaps and suggest future research needs. This scoping review searched within five electronic databases, in which only studies reported in English during the period 2010-2020 and published on mentoring, leadership and connectedness were selected. Studies were coded using thematic analysis. Included studies (n=25) were multi-clustered into five themes: peer support and peer relationships (68%), school connectedness (52%), well-being (48%), transition (40%), and leadership (20%). Most studies (64%) were conducted in private or independent schools within Australia, and 65% were qualitative. Future research efforts should focus on the interrelationship of peer to peer mentoring, leadership or school and peer connectedness. Additional studies within all school sectors would help low socio-economic areas, including vulnerable children, Indigenous populations, and regional areas.

Article link:

<https://openjournals.ljmu.ac.uk/index.php/prism/article/view/448>

Musarurwa David Chinofunga, Philemon Chigeza, & Subhashni Taylor: [Senior High School Mathematics Subjects in Queensland: Options and Trends of Student Participation](#)

PRISM 4(1): March 2022

Pages: 72-85

Abstract:

In the State of Queensland in Australia, Years 11 and 12 students can opt to study calculus based or non-calculus based mathematics. Calculus based mathematics subjects are a prerequisite for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), which has been identified as critically important for current and future productivity by the Australian government. The objective of this study was to identify broad trends in senior Queensland students' participation in calculus and non-calculus based Mathematics purely from a statistical viewpoint using a large data set from the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA). To this end, trends in Years 11 and 12 students' participation in calculus based Mathematics B and C, and non-calculus based Mathematics A and Prevocational Mathematics between 2010 and 2019 was investigated. The QCAA data was analysed using quantitative methods to identify trends in student participation in the various mathematics subject options. The data included number of schools, location, gender, indigenous or non-indigenous, residence status and number of students in different options. The results indicated that more male students opted for Mathematics B and C compared to females, and not all schools offered all options.

Article link:

<https://openjournals.ljmu.ac.uk/index.php/prism/article/view/446>

Aaron Teo: ["How difficult can it be?" A non-Indigenous 'Asian' Australian high school teacher's AsianCrit autoethnographic account of dealing with racial injustice](#)

PRISM 4(1): March 2022

Pages: 86-96

Abstract:

Australia's colonial past and subsequent propagation of the White Australia policy in the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 has meant that 'Whiteness' remains central to the national imaginary. Consequently, racial-colonial discourses axiomatically regulate scholarly and societal understandings of racial minorities through two unique but analogous debates – one focussed on the schism between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples; the other centred around immigration policy and multiculturalism (Curthoys, 2000). In the context of Australian education, there is a slowly developing collection of Critical Race Theory (CRT) scholarship that has addressed and challenged the inequities that pervade the Indigenous student experience (Ford, 2013; Vass, 2014, 2015); however, there has been much less momentum made with other racial minorities. Specifically, the experiences and voices of migrant pre-service and early career teachers from Asian backgrounds like myself, who have become increasingly prevalent in Australian education, remain largely absent from scholarship. In light of this, in this paper I use Asian CRT (AsianCrit) (Museus & Iftikar, 2013) to present an autoethnographic account of a migrant 'Asian' Australian high school teacher's subjectivities, quests for solidarity and attempts at dealing with racial injustice across a range of White Australian classrooms.

Article link:

<https://openjournals.ljmu.ac.uk/index.php/prism/article/view/465>

