



EDITORIAL

Life through a Prism

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Introduction

Welcome to the latest issue of PRISM: Volume 7, Issue 1. We begin this editorial with a welcome to an esteemed colleague who, as you will see from his personal narrative below, is no stranger to Prism. Peter provides a valuable addition to the Prism management team, and we are excited at the opportunities that this brings for the future of the journal. Without the support of a multi-million-pound publishers Prism is run on 'academic labour.' It thus relies on the commitment and motivations of its editorial board, a group comprising academics of varying experiences who all come together to enable the journal's vision. Each individual is committed professionally and upholds the integrity and high standards of academic publishing whilst simultaneously pushing conventions, and each individual does so out of a love and a drive for sustaining the creation of new knowledge in education. In this issue we welcome a new Managing Editor to the PRISM team, Professor Peter Wolstencroft:

I'm coming Home

The concept always fascinates me. The idea that each human has a place in the world is both tantalisingly attractive but also distressingly difficult to find. What

happens if you never find your place? What happens if home always stays out of reach? Mallett (2004) describes home as being something that is both physical, a place and a space, but also emotional, encompassing feelings and a haven from the stresses of the world. Whilst Rykwert (1991) differentiates between having a physical structure, a house, to live in and a home, somewhere to call your own and to escape from the stresses of the world, it is the more nebulous, emotional space, that is of particular interest.

Finding my tribe

Tribes provide comfort, protection, shelter and familiarity. Sometimes that is against an outside agent (Clarke 2008) but more often they represent support and an understanding that you do fit into the world. You do have a home. Tribes can be found at work, home or in the world between the two. Without your tribe it is easy to feel rootless and restless, adrift and alone. With your tribe, the emotional space that craves a place in life is sated and you feel at home with your tribe.

Life through a Prism

My belief is that the world should never be viewed as a homogenous, accepted place. Conformity breeds complacency, challenge leads to improvement and striving for something better should be encouraged

rather than suppressed. Just like this journal we should highlight, challenge and augment debate.

As I write this editorial, my first as co-managing editor of the journal, my overwhelming feeling is that I am coming home. At the start of my academic career I was adrift, unsure of my place, confused as to how to behave. A chance meeting in Liverpool with many of the names listed at the front of the journal changed all that. I met my tribe, a group of independent, interesting, challenging and immensely supportive people. Just like the journal, the group were eclectic, democratic, and unashamedly utopian in nature and a young academic was accepted and encouraged. Returning to this role feels like coming full circle and my hope is always that a new group of academics emerges, all seeing things differently, striving for understanding and a better future.

In this Issue

Andrew Jones transports us back to the 1990s, in many ways a decade of hope and expectation. David Hargreaves vision for a profession grounded in research rather than rhetoric remains influential but whether it will ever fully reach fruition is still debatable. The birth of many groups designed to promote research in education has meant that whilst research has maintained a high profile, the type of research has been a matter of discussion. In common with much of the sector, quantitative evidence appears to be used above qualitative measures, a situation that can prove problematic for those not looking to standardise the profession.

The importance of not merely treating individuals as a collective is powerfully endorsed by Kirimi and Wood who explore how to maintain a supportive and enabling environment for menstruating girls. A key strand running through this article is agency. Education should be transformative in nature and by exploring this topic, the authors are working to remove barriers for anyone looking to transform their lives.

The remaining articles take us inside the classroom, or in the case of Dabaja, outside the classroom and into a Forest School. The French education is notoriously regimented with an apocryphal story once telling of General de Gaulle looking at his watch and telling those

gathering around him 'it's two o'clock, France is studying history', but the author paints a different picture, one where forest schools have started to flourish and where independent learning is not merely tolerated but encouraged.

Two more articles focus on life inside the classroom. Johnson's discussion of how Lego based therapy can help autistic children and young people is an uplifting read of an innovative approach to secondary pedagogy, albeit one that inevitably identifies barriers built on the need for conformity, outcomes and limited budgets. Gaston and Dixon's eloquent explanation of why a video feedback approach is an effective method for improving students' comprehension and interaction with feedback shows that even in a regimented system, educators can explore innovative and effective approaches.

We close with Suleman et al's look at how to support students using a peer mentoring model that allows students to feel as though they had the support they need. The dangers of a regimented system are explored and the scheme attempts to help students feel as though they had a place, what the author describes as 'connectedness'. That word encapsulates nicely what Prism means to me; a place where lots of different people, a tribe of people, come together to explore, learn, innovate and feel as though they have a home.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

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