

Developing Research-Informed Practice in Teacher Education.

Interim Progress Report – March 2017

Lead Applicant: Dr. John Thornby

Co-Applicant: Dr. Deborah Outhwaite

The remit of this project is to promote research-informed teaching and learning within schools and teacher education, via the creation of a research journal to capture and disseminate innovation and best practice. This best practice comes from a range of sources including practitioner research by current teachers from within the Warwick partnership; whole-school initiatives from local school leadership teams; and, most importantly, research projects conducted by Warwick students.

The project has a local and regional focus and aims to have impact in the local community, as well as with students at the university. Many practising teachers in the local community are involved with the university in a variety of capacities, including serving as mentors for Warwick's various PGCE teacher training pathways. The thought process behind the project was to provide a platform to share ideas and ensure that teacher education and teaching in the local community are underpinned by the latest scholarship.

Launching a journal has, itself, been an educational experience and the project team is extremely grateful to Yvonne Budden (Head of Scholarly Communications, Library) and Yuexi Liu (IAS, Chief Editor of *Exchanges*) for their advice and kind assistance on this journey. The process began in the Autumn term by establishing an Editorial Board and deciding on a name for the journal. The Board initially consisted of John Thornby and Deborah Outhwaite (Senior Teaching Fellows within the Centre for Professional Education) and was joined by Chris Heal (an English teacher from Bilton School, but also a postgraduate student on the collaborative MA in Professional Educational, offered by CPE). The Board wanted a name for the journal that reflected the transformative nature of project while maintaining its identity as a Warwick project and eventually settled on the *Warwick Journal of Education – Transforming Teaching* (WJETT).

The project has started promisingly, with the lead and co-applicants attending a variety of networking events with schools and other stakeholders to promote the journal and canvass for submissions before Christmas. A [call for papers](#) was circulated, with author deadlines set to coincide with school holidays in order to maximise the chances of practising teachers being able to engage with the project and submit articles during their limited free time.

The next step was to establish an online presence for WJETT, which took place in December 2016. The infrastructure of the journal is provided within the library's Open Journal System (OJS) platform, which provides a forward-facing journal webpage for digital communication and publication, as well as a technical back-end with tried and tested workflows for journal management (with some customisation possible). The journal can be located at <http://journals.warwick.ac.uk/index.php/wjett/> and interested parties are encouraged to register as a reader (and/or prospective author and reviewer if desired).

The university library has applied for an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) on behalf of WJETT. Unfortunately, due to the explosion of new journals requesting ISSNs and then never

publishing anything, the British Library are now not issuing ISSNs until the first issue has been published. Nevertheless, WJETT has been granted “approval in principle”. The journal is also being registered within appropriate educational databases and being indexed accordingly.

The project is a little past the half-way stage in terms of its IATL funding, but there is a firm commitment from CPE that the journal will be maintained going forwards, as it also serves as a useful focal point for developing partnership with local schools, as well as furthering the national “Research Ed” agenda, which seeks to bring the community of practising teachers closer to research culture and scholarship.

In February, the Editorial Board was joined by Prof. Ralph Tabberer as Associate Editor. Ralph is an Honorary Professor in CPE and was the Chief Executive of the Training and Development Agency for Schools from 2000 to 2006 before becoming Director General for Schools until 2009. He brings with him a wealth of educational experience and an address book of high profile contacts who will be approached to write guest features for the journal. Ralph's principal interest is in international education and he will curate an annual special issue with this focus, as well as author a guest editorial article for the inaugural issue which situates local and regional education within national and international contexts.

Response to the call for papers has already exceeded expectation, with 15 expressions of interest from staff and students across three departments, as well as alumni and teachers from the local partnership and beyond. At present, there have been eight article submissions, with about the same number again anticipated to arrive within the next 10 days. The review process is underway and reviewers have been selected. The journal's policy is for all papers to be reviewed by at least two peer reviewers: one academic, to ensure accuracy and validity of the work, and one practitioner, to ensure articles are fit for purpose and tailored appropriately for the readership. Many of the practitioner reviewers are current students and several of the academic reviewers are staff from CPE who are also studying for postgraduate degrees with CES.

Warwick Student Involvement:

Editorial Board: 2 PGT Authors: 1 PGT, 4 PGR Reviewers: 4 PGT, 1 PGR

Warwick Alumni Involvement:

Editorial Board: 1 Authors: 5 Reviewers: 2

Warwick School Partner Involvement:

Editorial Board: 1 Authors: 1 Reviewers: 2

Articles have been received on a range of topics, including strategies for improving pupils' literacy; the use of ICT in teaching mathematics, addressing the skills shortage in Higher Education and the role of Shakespeare in the modern English classroom; in addition to critical reflections on a school outreach project from the School of Life Sciences and a WIHEA-funded multi-author blog project discussing the identity of student teacher-researchers. It is expected that additional students will be engaged in the project as authors and reviewers as and when further submissions are received.

Visual styling for the journal is an ongoing work in progress. The OJS website has been skinned with Warwick branding but WJETT is yet to cultivate its own unique look. In early March the Editorial Board agreed that WJETT should hold a competition for students and members of the Warwick schools

partnership to design a digital logo and banner for the journal. The competition will launch in the next few weeks and the winning entry will be used for visual branding, both online as well as in print. The project team are currently looking into the legal implications for copyright ownership and intellectual property rights before going live with the competition.

WJETT is on course to publish its inaugural issue on 22 June. This coincides with CPE's annual partnership conference, which provides the ideal venue to launch the journal. This conference represents an opportunity to celebrate the successes of partnership working, as well as motivate others to become actively engaged with WJETT in the future and ensure the longevity and legacy of the project. It is envisaged that every conference pack will contain a hard copy of the first issue, meaning it will reach upwards of 100 individuals in attendance - in addition to a copy being mailed to each of CPE's partner schools. This represents a change to the proposed spend for the project and funds will be diverted from staffing costs in order to meet the increased demand for printed materials. The project team felt that this would improve the reach and engagement of the journal within the local community, which furthers the overall aim of the project.