Although teaching was not my first career choice I am, four decades later, pleased that the Deputy Headteacher of my secondary school convinced me that 'becoming a teacher' was right for me. I have found that the richness of a teaching role in all of the educational settings I have worked have been stimulating, and cognitively and emotionally rewarding, with every day providing successes, new understanding, as well as challenges. The knowledge that you are educating, guiding and hopefully enthusing the next generation is a responsibility I, and I think the majority of teachers take seriously, and with pride. Learners are at the centre of all our work and must remain our key focus. However, there is constant change, and teachers and all educators must be given the tools and space to redesign and develop lessons and programmes for our next generations. As Bangou and Vasilopoulos reference in their article 'it is no longer what happened that matters so much, but rather what is happening now and what can happen next' (Vaninni, 2015, p.11).   I believe that being an educator is complex (Elton-Chalcraft & Cooper, 2022) requiring committed, highly skilled professionals who love and value learning for life. This 'value' is echoed throughout all the articles in this Issue, even though they are reporting on research studies which explore a wide range of subjects from teaching computing in colleges, designing initial teacher education (ITE) programmes, to the realities of being a SENCo in England and a possible solution to professional isolation.

However, despite the important role teachers play in society, in recent years there has, I posit, been a decreasing regard for teachers and their professional identity in some countries. Driven by neoliberalism and the marketisation of statutory bodies, with performability and accountability becoming seen as the 'gold standard,' achieving nationally set targets, appears often to trump the theoretical understanding needed to teach, and the holistic wellbeing of teachers and learners. Additionally, traditional professional boundaries have been 'flexed,' and the demand to take on others' roles has meant that professional satisfaction and ability to fulfil their own responsibilities have been compromised (Soan & Monsen, 2023).

The articles in this issue of Practice echo these messages in constructive, future directed ways. Despite the barriers which currently plague aspects of education and teacher's practice in some countries, the authors of these articles focus on how to adjust support provided to provisional or training teachers, so that they can better equip their learners for a world where technology and market drivers are dominant, as well as strengthen their own emotional resilience and teaching practice. We hear very

clearly in these articles about how teachers need to care and focus on the learners and spend time building relationships and understanding their individual needs. The complexity of teaching, and learning to teach, are all too often underestimated, but I feel, that the authors of the studies shared in this issue, confront these challenges positively, providing research informed ideas, and ways of working. I strongly recommend that even if you do not teach in schools, colleges, or Initial Teacher Education (ITE), the articles in this issue discuss and explore topics, which are, I suggest, transferable across disciplines and meaningful to all educators, so please read on.

In the first article Hinojosa shares findings from a two-case, interpretative research study which asks the question, 'In what ways do modelling and dialogic feedback support prospective teachers (PTs) enactment and appropriation of instructional strategies.' The author wanted to see if PTs would benefit if their practice mentor or supervisor intentionally, through the use of modelling and dialogic feedback as a scaffold, help them to make connections between the knowledge learnt during theory sessions in university and their practice. Hinojosa found that this type of onsite coaching supported PTs to reflect on and self-evaluate their own teaching practice, helping them to recognise they were responsible for and active participants for their own learning and teaching practice. Hinojosa considered that this approach was successful in the study because it enabled PTs to 'reflect about practice in practice' (p.24). This work made me recognise the importance of the integration of theoretical knowledge and practice, and thus the importance for teachers to have the time to reflect, to discuss and self-evaluate as part of their initial and on-going professional learning.

In the following article Bangou and Vasilopoulos' research also argues for the need for PTs to be guided by teachers in order to seamlessly connect what they learn in university to their Digitally Technology (DT) -enabled classrooms. Using a new materialist methodology which drew from assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) of both the research and the online course, this article explores how including a Community Service Learning (CSL) component as part of a Technology Enhanced Language Education (TELE) course helped instructors to integrate technology into language teaching, enabling trainee teachers' professional knowledge and selves to be constantly 're-shaped.' Interestingly, the authors used rhizoanalysis (Strom & Martin, 2017) as part of their analytical procedures, as well as traditional methods, to

better aid their understanding of both the process of teaching and learning and how to research this process. In conclusion, Bangou and Vasilopoulos propose that it is necessary to move away from neo-liberal mindsets and adopt a non-linear experimentation approach to understanding how trainee teachers (and in-service teachers) put into practice what they learn in university and through experience.

The next article by Allison reports on a research study which explores what is needed to design and teach computing programmes for students in colleges. Although subject specific, I strongly recommend that learnings from this research could be transferable to many other subjects and teaching phases. Using a qualitative thematic approach, the author identifies six main themes from collected data. Overwhelmingly, the author concludes that teachers need to focus on developing students as learners: enhancing their 'soft skills,' building relationships and understanding their needs. It also states that employing staff who are passionate about helping students learn, who care and want to understand them was even 'deemed more important than the teaching of the subject itself by some of the interviewees' (p.10). Once again therefore, this article amplifies the message that educators need to support students in learning how to learn by understanding them and their needs, rather than just delivering specific knowledge.

Moving on from college teaching to working within early childhood education, Lawler, Lindsay and Jones' article reports on research which was undertaken during the Covid-19 lockdowns. Their research examines the use of the Community of Practice (CoP) framework within early childhood education (ECE) and specifically, in relation to a visual arts special interest group (SIG), members of which met online to talk about lockdown experiences and their passion for ECE visual arts pedagogy following the cancellation of an international face to face conference. Findings from this qualitative case study found that this SIG provided an arena for collaboration, for friendship formation and for knowledge sharing. Authors also found that many of the SIGs characteristics were closely aligned with the CoP framework and therefore they propose that the CoP can potentially offer a solution to those who experience professional isolation by providing 'a sustainable and relationally rich counterpoint.'

The final article in this Issue of Practice, explores the reality of being a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) in English schools during the Covid-19 pandemic. Using IPA (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis) Dawes identified the superordinate themes of 'wellbeing,' 'partnership' and 'challenges of Covid-19' as

important findings. Factors relating to SENCo agency including their role as advocates for children, young people and families, as champions of equality and social justice and the need for them to truly become strategic leaders are all explored. However, as seen in the previous articles the ability to fulfil the SENCo role is 'constrained' by neoliberal agendas, necessitating them to focus on performability and accountability rather than on listening and responding to the needs of learners.

It is clear that although perhaps unintentional, all of these articles have at their heart the need to focus on enhancing the understanding and skills of the learner, whether prospective teachers, in-service educators, or pupils. The craft of teaching is viewed positively in all of the articles. All emphasise the importance of relationships, of understanding learners and of the space and time to reflect and critically engage in the development of their professional skills so that they can provide the guidance needed for others to learn how to be learners of future generations. The opportunity to be able to experiment, to re-design programmes to meet learners' needs have also been voiced. Finally, I feel that what all of these articles express clearly is that it is teachers and researchers 'passion' for caring and understanding learners' needs that will continue to break through the barriers to create safe and exciting environments for all learners.

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