

Editors' Introduction to Special Theme Issue: Meanings Under the Microscope (Part 2)

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Articles in Part 2

This is the second of the three-part inaugural theme issue of the *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, which publishes the first wave of the refereed proceedings of the 2nd international pedagogies and learning conference. The conference, which was held at the Toowoomba campus of the University of Southern Queensland in Australia between 18 and 20 September 2005, had the theme "Meanings Under the Microscope"; the refereed theme articles in this issue contribute to a widely ranging and thorough engagement with how meanings in teaching and learning are constructed and with what effects. The remainder of this editorial introduction outlines the articles appearing in this issue.

The first article, by Farrah Fayyaz, M. Ashraf Iqbal and Yasser Hashmi from the National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences and the Lahore University of Management Sciences in Pakistan, is part of a broader project to which articles in Parts 1 and 3 contribute also and is concerned with barriers restricting Pakistani engineering students' understandings of the complex concepts associated with semiconductor electronics. The authors draw on concept maps developed by students and structured interviews with students and instructors to elicit these barriers and identify the learning bottlenecks that they represent. On the basis of these data, and calling on relevant learning theory constructs, the authors advocate selected teaching methodologies to enhance students' learning of this intricate topic.

In the second article, by Ting Wang and Shujie Zhang from the University of Canberra in Australia, the authors turn their attention to the strategies needed to enhance the effectiveness of the in-service training of Chinese police officers working in Beijing and studying part of their program in Australia. Data gathering and analysis focus on a qualitative study of semi-structured interviews with five officers. The study highlights crucial differences between individual and organisational learning needs, between Chinese and western approaches to andragogy and between the contexts of training in Australia and working in China.

Ian Eddington, from the University of Southern Queensland in Australia, uses the third article to pose important questions about the connections among the soul, the mind and contemporary science education. The article deploys writings by Plato, Berkeley and other authorities to posit different aspects of the soul in premodern, modern and postmodern times, which are then linked with the pedagogical issues of

teaching methods and concept changes. The author argues that science and science education should continue to use common sense appeals to experience as the warrants for their claims about knowledge construction.

In the fourth article, by Beverley Moriarty, Patrick Alan Danaher and Geoff Danaher from Central Queensland University and the University of Southern Queensland in Australia, attention is given to the mobile communities of the Australian show people as cooperative and symbolic communities of practice. The authors demonstrate general principles and specific strategies of both types of communities of practice exhibited in the show people's lived experiences and educational opportunities. They conclude by linking the show people's reflexive meaning-making with broader questions of pedagogy and learning pertaining to other groups and individuals, particularly those for whom formal education is not automatically accessible or empowering.

The issue concludes with two refereed articles not linked with the theme of "Meanings Under The Microscope", reflecting the editors' desire to publish a wide range of theme and non-theme articles in future issues of the journal. The first of these, by Afendi Hamat and Mohamed Amin Embi from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, focuses on a topic of concern to most if not all contemporary universities: the effectiveness of the course management systems intended to organise those universities' provision of e-learning. In opposition to a vendor focus on content, the authors draw on behaviourist, cognitivist and constructivist learning theories to argue in favour of a learning-driven approach to the design and implementation of course management systems.

The second non-theme article, and the final article in this issue, by Shaireen Rasheed from Long Island University in the United States of America, explores the links between naming and the existentialist curriculum of action and the creation of a pluralistic pedagogy. Drawing on the ideas of Paulo Freire and Maxine Greene, the author calls for a pedagogy in which students engage in naming and educators cross borders, as a means of negotiating and translating some of the complexities of difference. She illustrates this argument by explaining how she operationalises four key principles of this approach in her own classroom, thereby inviting readers to make the connections between theory and practice – or action – to which this journal is intended to contribute.

Acknowledgments

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