Editors’ Introduction to Special Theme Issue: Meanings Under the Microscope (Part 3)

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Articles in Part 3

This is the third and hence the final of the three-part inaugural theme issue of the *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, which has published the first wave of the refereed proceedings of the 2nd international pedagogies and learning conference, held at the Toowoomba campus of the University of Southern Queensland in Australia between 18 and 20 September 2005. The conference theme was “Meanings Under the Microscope”; the refereed theme articles in this issue contribute to a diverse and comprehensive account of the constructions of meanings in multiple educational contexts and of the effects and impact of those constructions. The remainder of this editorial introduction outlines the articles appearing in this issue; the introduction to the next issue will include selected reflections on the 18 theme articles constituting the conference’s first and second wave refereed proceedings.

In the first article, Allan Leslie White of the University of Western Sydney in Australia is concerned with the character of the relationship between graphics calculators and pedagogical change in secondary mathematics classrooms. The article develops a matrix of pedagogical approaches derived from the research literature and designed to maximise the effective use of graphics calculators to promote such change. At the same time, the author acknowledges both the limitations of using graphics calculators and the pedagogical implications arising from those limitations.

The second article, by Robyn Torok from Education Queensland in Australia, focuses on the association between propositional and practical knowledge reflected in the metaphors and images articulated by pre-service teachers during their fieldwork experiences. The study explored three pre-service teachers’ explications of the supposed theory–practice divide in relation to behaviour management and pedagogy. The author’s major finding is that it was less this divide than the supervising teachers’ teacher-centred pedagogy that prevented the pre-service teachers from developing their practical knowledge as comprehensively as they might have wished.

Poh Gek (Julie) Lim, an experienced teacher in Singapore and a postgraduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Southern Queensland in Australia, uses the third article to identify effective pedagogical and learning strategies that promote Internet information literacy among secondary school students in Singapore.
The article reports research conducted with 13 secondary school students in three schools in Singapore using a combination of survey questionnaires, a dialogue session, exercises completed by the students and matrices completed by the author. Findings included that participants were aware of the importance of Internet information literacy but also that high levels of computer and Internet literacy did not automatically lead to highly developed Internet information literacy.

In the fourth article, Ting Wang from the University of Canberra in Australia engages with the important issue of the internationalisation of higher education by exploring Chinese educational leaders’ experiences in the University of Canberra’s offshore program. The author deployed a phenomenographic case study research method and conducted two sets of interviews with 20 participants in the program. The findings, which identify five distinct conceptions of learning and five stimuli of conceptual change, demonstrate both the potential benefits of transnational education and the need for such education to attend systematically to local contexts.

The fifth article, by Harika Masud, M. Ashraf Iqbal and Yasser Hashmi of the Lahore University of Management Sciences in Pakistan, is the third in a series of papers by this research team published in the first three issues of this journal and related to the pedagogical advantages of using concept maps to clarify thinking and stimulate conceptual development. This article focuses on the graduate course “Problems of Learning and Teaching” that uses a combination of project-based learning and what the authors call “meaningful learning”. The authors argue that concept mapping needs to be used in tandem with contemporary learning theories (such as that of multiple intelligences) to articulate with individual learning styles and hence to maximise individual learning outcomes.