

Editorial

At the time of writing we are just weeks away from a general election in Britain, the outcome of which is surely one of the most difficult ever to predict. ‘Purdah’, the six-week pre-election period, is under way, preventing central and local government from announcing any initiative that might be viewed as partisan by political opponents. We hope that one initiative that will get through is the recent Select Committee recommendation that personal, social and health education (PSHE) becomes statutory, implying the requirement for PSHE to be embedded in Initial Teacher Training (ITT). Equally hard to predict is future policy on teacher education. Despite their apparent hate-lust, both major parties share more views in common about ITT than not. The jostling for complementarity between smaller parties does little to inspire belief in significant change. Sir Andrew Carter’s proposal that the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) should be ‘optional’ when qualifying offers little hope that universities will continue to play a major role in the development of future teachers. But hope must remain. The British Educational Research Association–Royal Society of Arts (BERA–RSA) inquiry into the role of research in teacher education, published last year, is a must-read for all involved in ITT. It is worth reflecting that many teachers now charged with responsibility for training teachers in schools have come from occupational pathways (eg the Graduate Teacher Programme; School Direct), rather than the more research-informed PGCE routes that presumably accounted for what the Department for Education in 2011 called the ‘best generation of teachers we have ever had’. For student teachers, 36 weeks leaves little time for engagement with research, but research must be at the heart of the preparation of our teaching workforce. Its unique selling point, within universities, must be championed by those

at the ‘chalkface’ if we are to avoid reducing ITT to ‘toolbox’ solutions and survival strategies.

We begin this issue with an article from one of many ‘champions’, **Sue Wiseman**. Her study considers the way in which music is currently used as an intervention both therapeutically and within the classroom in mainstream and special education, and asks whether it has further potential to enhance learning for children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). **Beate Hellowell** considers implications for teacher education in England following the introduction of the new Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (CoP) 2014. Her article argues that rather than viewing the Code merely as a manual, a critical engagement with its messages and intentions may better prepare beginning teachers to meet the demands and expectations articulated within. **M. L. White**, in her article, reflects on ethnographic research at Educational Video Center (EVC), a non-profit media education centre in New York City. In her paper she provides an analysis of EVC as a third space between formal and informal education, and details some of the processes involved in Documentary Workshop, one of its core programmes, in order to discuss how meaning is made through a complex series of pedagogical processes. **Graham Robertson** describes the experiences and approaches used in one London inner-city Learning Support Unit to engage and support students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Drawing on the work of Foucault’s 1983 lectures on ‘Discourse and Truth’, ‘student voice’, Ginott’s congruent conversation techniques and the use of story and metaphor, Graham’s paper seeks to illustrate and explore the use of these different techniques and approaches to assist students to make sense of

the situations they face. **Mary Linington** reports the first part of the research done to explore the attitudes of graduate scientists training to be chemistry teachers, involved in a UK government initiative to increase the number of chemistry teachers in secondary schools in England and Wales. **Estelle Martin** and **Victoria Hussain** explore the Expressive Arts and Design (EAD) area of learning and development of the revised Early Years Foundation Stage framework in England. The importance of young children experiencing opportunities to develop their creativity through the arts and a range of multimodal experiences is promoted.

Our guest writer is **Pat Sikes**, Professor of Qualitative Inquiry at the School of Education, University of Sheffield and currently Pro Vice-Chancellor at Victoria University, Australia. Pat is currently directing an Alzheimer's Society-funded project 'The Perceptions and Experiences of Children and Young People who Have a Parent with Dementia'. Her in-process and recent publications include Goodson, I., Sikes, P., Andrews, M. & Antikainen, A. (eds.) (2015) *The Routledge handbook of narrative and life history*, London, Routledge; Sikes, P. (ed.) (2013) *Autoethnography*, Sage Benchmarks in Social Science Series, 4 vols., London, Sage; Sikes, P. & Piper, H. (eds.) (2011) *Ethics and academic freedom in educational research*, London, Routledge; and Sikes, P. & Piper, H. (2010) *Researching sex and lies in the classroom: allegations of sexual misconduct in schools*, London, Routledge/Falmer. In her article herein, Pat Sikes discusses how a commitment to follow C. Wright Mills's (1959) imperative to engage the sociological imagination ethically and critically can shape research agendas. She tells two stories from her career about research that she, in her own words, didn't so much choose to do but which, rather, seemed to choose her to do it.

This number's book reviews are provided by **Daniel Ayres**, **Neil Herrington** and **Cathy Hurley**.

As always we hope that you enjoy the collection of articles in this issue. It is with great pleasure that we announce Professor **Kari Smith** as our guest writer for the next (October 2015) edition of RiTE.

Gerry Czerniawski