

# Editorial

*Gerry Czerniawski*

We begin this issue of *RiTE* with an article by **Mairéad Holden, Stephanie O'Reilly** and **John Paul Mynott**, exemplifying the ways in which digital innovations in teacher education have continued to evolve since the Coronavirus pandemic. In a study that took place in Scotland and Ireland, the authors focus on their facilitation of two different online lesson study projects.

Reception teachers frequently report feeling a tension between the development of children's academic knowledge and skills and their development within prime areas of learning (communication and language; personal, social and emotional development and physical development). **Anna Gawthorpe** and **Kevin Campbell Davidson**'s action research project sought to develop a research-informed approach to implementing guided play in the teaching of early number concepts that simultaneously addressed these prime areas of learning with a focus on physical development.

Conservatoires offer intensive musical training with an emphasis on preparation for careers in performance. **Luan Shaw**'s article

details a pilot study undertaken at a UK conservatoire where a focus-group discussion enabled three final-year undergraduate music students to become partners in the research process. In speaking openly about their learning trajectories across a four-year period of study in the conservatoire, these students reflected on their evolving attitudes towards careers in instrumental teaching, whilst challenging institutional perceptions of what constitutes a successful musician.

It has been a decade since the Department for Education introduced the policy of performance-related pay (PRP) to schools across England. The dominance of neoliberal ideology, along with the culture of high-stakes testing, performativity and accountability within the profession, has led many teachers to reassess their position as policy actors. **Ammal Farzana Gillani**'s article focuses on the policy of PRP in England and examines how it has affected teachers. The author concludes by stating that the rise of performativity, tests and accountability through such neoliberal policies as PRP, has led many teachers to reassess their position as policy actors, and come to a realisation of

how PRP has, evidently, reduced their autonomy within the profession.

Drawing on work carried out for her Master's thesis, **Rebecca Holmes** focuses on the experience of non-German parents whose children have been diagnosed with Special and/or additional Educational Needs (SEN) whilst living in Bavaria, Germany.

The rationale for her research is the lived experience within the researcher's own expatriate community, where children with SEN can be actively excluded from their local primary and secondary schools or international schools. Suggestions for improvement include better staff and teacher training, having access to English-speaking professionals, the provision of a dedicated case manager, more information in English and greater access provision to English-speaking parent support groups.

The theory of status, applied by Ovenden-Hope (2022) to the current crisis of teacher shortages, helps to identify one of the underlying factors that impact teachers entering the teaching workforce in England. In his appreciative response to her paper in

an earlier edition of this periodical, **Huw Humphreys** argues that the structural factors that have come about with the neoliberal policy agenda of the last 40 years have impacted the status of teaching and the educative purpose, and that without a clear understanding of, and willingness to oppose, these structural factors, it is unlikely that we will solve the recruitment/retention challenge.

In a powerful piece by **Sarah-Jayne Gonzalez** and **Hannah Holdgate**, the authors argue that the role of the early years practitioner and their disposition, individuality and professional knowledge, alongside the concepts of love, care and compassion, have become of increasing interest to researchers. Yet, love is a word that is not ordinarily used in early years education and care contexts in England (Cousins, 2017). Along with the researchers' personal experience in early years settings, their article explores, defines, and, ultimately, yields a better understanding of practitioners' views of love and care, and its place in early childhood education and care.

The synoptic methodology presented, in the final article of this edition, by **Fehmida Iqbal**, is her portrayal of the journey of an Educational Doctoral (EdD) student in relation to her decision to use the following research methods: (1) classroom observations, (2) individual interviews with pupils and teachers, and (3) focus group interviews with pupils; as well as her justification for selecting Thematic Analysis for analysing the data produced from these methods. The authors' article highlights the importance of carefully selecting research methods and justifying their use in order to produce data that provides meaningful insights into complex topics.

The book review for this issue of *RiTE* is provided by **Corinna Richards**, an EdD student at the University of East London.

As always, we hope that you enjoy the collection of articles and reviews in this issue of the periodical. If you are interested in writing for this publication, please contact members of the editorial team.



## REFERENCES

Cousins, S. (2017). 'Practitioners' constructions of love in early childhood education and care'. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 25(1), 16–29.

Ovenden-Hope, T. (2022). 'A status-based crisis of teacher shortages? Exploring the role of "status" in teacher recruitment and retention'. *Research in Teacher Education*, 12(1), 36–42.