

Whole and Inclusive Schooling: A Promising Symbiosis

By Phyllis Jones

Welcome to this themed issue of the International Journal of Whole Schooling. In this issue, teacher educators and researchers from Australia, Canada and the United States of America explore the reciprocal relationship between principles of whole schooling and inclusive schooling. The researchers shed light on systemic challenges that teacher educators must acknowledge in order to prepare teachers to be more effective in the complex world of the diverse classroom. They also offer examples of teacher educators who respond to some of the challenges in the sustained and creative work they do with schools and teachers.

In the first article, *Whole School Initiative: Has Inclusive Education Gone Astray?* Joseph Agbenyega and Sunanta Klibthong present an Australian research project that explored the experiences of families of sub-Saharan African descent and preschool educators as they implemented two new national curricular. Curricular aimed at supporting a whole school approach to early childhood inclusive education and developed professional relationships with families to achieve common outcomes for all children in Australia. The concepts of Belonging, Becoming and Being underpin this new curriculum framework. Through the lens of Bourdieu's social theory concepts of Field, Capital and Habitus we hear of the juxtaposition of policy and practice through the stories the families shared. The families tell of experiences where their children are treated differently because of their race and cultural heritage, which results in the whole family becoming marginalized from the early years' education setting. Through these stories, we are challenged, as teacher educators to adopt an inclusive whole schooling approach to educate all teachers to understand the complexity of diversity.

In the second article which is based in the USA, *Understanding and Dismantling Barriers for Partnerships for Inclusive Education: A Cultural Historical Activity Theory Perspective*, Federico Waitoller and Elizabeth Kozleski share their research which problematizes the partnerships and relationships between school district practicum/intern sites and teacher preparation programs in evolving inclusive pedagogies. Their article draws from Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), where they examined one school-university partnership from the point of view of university-based site faculty. The research study shines a light on the tensions that emerge when teacher educators and district personnel, two communities with different core missions, engage in a common activity intended to produce mutual benefits. Recommendations are offered to teacher educators to enable them to anticipate and reduce barriers to active, engaged school-university partnerships that support greater inclusive policies and practices.

The third article, *Applying Universal Design for Learning to Instructional Lesson Planning*, by Donna McGhie-Richmond and Andrew N. Sung, offers a constructive way for teacher educators to engage in the principles of whole schooling and inclusive practice through an explicit focus upon Universal Design for Learning. In their Canadian mixed methods research project they study the effects of introducing Universal Design for Learning Principles and Guidelines in a university teacher education program with pre-service and practicing teachers. The quantitative changes that teachers made to their instructional lessons suggest that the Universal Design for Learning guidelines and principles provide teachers with a valuable framework for proactively developing instruction that supports all learners. The qualitative

themes that emerged from the research, *learning for all* and *transformative practice*, indicate that Universal Design for Learning provides teachers with a model for achieving inclusion.

The final article reports on work carried out in the South West of Florida related to the contribution of facilitated leadership in promoting sustained whole school change. Chris Forlin, Ann Gillies and I explore the enactment of key principles of facilitated leadership in our article, *The Contribution of Facilitated Leadership to Systems Development for Greater Inclusive Practices*. The article presents an exploration of the development of greater inclusive practices across an early years service and an elementary school that are both adopting a whole school systems approach. The contribution of two educational leaders, a district supervisor and an elementary school principal in South West Florida, to the development of facilitated processes is explored in light of best practice for effective school change. These two real life examples of facilitated leadership in action are shared to illustrate a framework for leadership that has the potential to create systems-wide development that is sustainable. This framework includes the creation of a context for developing a common vision, shared ownership and decision-making. It has been a pleasure being involved in the development and editing of this themed issue of IJWS.

The four articles are complementary in providing insight into the complexities of the relationship between the principles of whole schooling and developing sustained inclusive practices.

Phyllis Jones, Ph.D.
Department of Special Education
College of Education
University of South Florida
Tampa, Florida
pjones7@usf.edu