Editorial:

A Fond Farewell

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This issue is my last as editor of Brock Education. It has been an honour to serve as editor for over 6 years!

In 2008, Darlene Ciuffetelli Parker and I became co-editors of the journal. During our tenure, we placed particular emphasis on practitioner inquiry and research of interest to educators in primary, secondary and tertiary settings. As the journal had just been placed on-line by Tony Di Petta, the previous editor, we worked hard to position Brock Education as an open access journal capable of attaining wider circulation than was possible when it was a limited circulation print publication.

As the sole editor since 2011, I have encouraged an eclectic range of scholarship grounded in issues of professional practice. While teaching and teacher education have been areas of particular interest, I am proud to have published articles from international scholars and ones that address the pressing needs in Aboriginal communities.

The next issue will be a special theme issue with guest editors, followed by the first issue by the new editor, Dolana Mogadime.

This editorial provides me with the opportunity to reflect on my tenure as editor before introducing the six articles and one book review in this issue.

I am pleased that the reach of Brock Education has increased tremendously since it became an open access journal. This is evident from an analysis of readership in 2013-2014. There were over 10,000 readers from 100 countries, with Canadians (29%) and Americans (24%) being the largest sources of readers. This wider readership makes the journal more attractive to scholars interested in disseminating their work to a wider audience.

During this time, Brock Education has also become more rigorous. The acceptance rate is below 40%, with a double-blind peer review process and careful line editing by two very capable editorial assistants, Catherine Longboat and Stephanie Tukonic.

It has been wonderful to contribute to the scholarly enterprise by helping scholars and practitioners bring their work to life and make it accessible to a wide audience. Journal editors play important roles identifying prospective pieces, selecting appropriate reviewers, guiding the revision process, encouraging authors to stretch themselves, and helping in the crafting of clear, accessible texts. The appreciation shown by authors has lighten the often heavy work of running a journal.

As a journal based in Ontario, Brock Education welcomes articles that address educational issues of local concern. In “Student Perceptions of Literacy after the Ontario Secondary Literacy Course: A Qualitative Inquiry,” Lianne Van De Wal and Thomas G. Ryan examine the impact of a remedial literacy course provided to students who fail the standardized provincial literacy test in Grade 10. While failure is difficult, the feedback from students suggest that courses that focus on self-esteem, engagement and skill development can “assist these learners in a holistic way that respects their abilities while encouraging positive, productive and
authentic growth.” While the need was identified through a standardized test, the authors suggest that this vision of literacy can be applied more widely.

During my tenure as editor, I have been interested in the experiences of those who are less represented in educational research. As the journal readership is broad, articles that make these issues accessible to all educators are particularly welcome. “A Comparison of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Students on the Inter-Related Dimensions of Self-Concept, Strengths and Achievement” by Jessica Whitley, Edward Rawana and Keith Brownlee achieves this goal by reporting on the ways in which self-concept affect learning for both groups. While she notes lower self-concept and academic achievement for Aboriginal students, Whitley sensitively positions this as a reflection on the limitations of school systems that may harbour prejudiced assumptions and “may not align with their traditional ways of learning and the measuring of competence and success.” She also notes the importance of faith and culture in fostering Aboriginal student self-concept and achievement.

In recent years, Brock Education has published a significant number of articles by teacher educators examining their practice. “Shifting Perspectives and Practices: Teacher Candidates’ Experiences of an Aboriginal Infusion in Mainstream Teacher Education” is an example of this kind of article. Melissa Blimkie, Diane Vetter and Celia Haig-Brown thoughtfully combine personal reflection and rigorous qualitative research design in this examination of a highly innovative Aboriginal Infusion initiative within the mainstream teacher education program at York University. They explore how infusing Aboriginal content and pedagogies for a cohort of teacher candidates can increase awareness and improve practice. They also suggest that such pilot projects can influence programming across the institution.

Brock Education has expanded its reach nationally and internationally thanks to on-line accessibility. “Exploring the Inner and Outer Cultural Landscapes of Counseling Candidates towards Diverse Students and Families through Self-Reflection” by Adonay A. Montes, Fernando Rodriguez-Valls and Laurie Schroeder from California is an example of the journal’s international scope. The authors offer interesting perspectives on the preparation of counselor candidates. Results from student surveys suggest that understanding their own identities can help ease the process of creating bridges between counselors and the cultural richness of students and parents with whom they work.

The journal also examines contemporary issues in higher education. For example, “Today’s University Students and Their Need to Connect” addresses challenges posed by technology in university learning. Theresa Russo, Moira Fallon, Jie Zhang and Veronica Acevedo surveyed 390 students to determine how they perceive technology in learning. Findings suggest that students believe that supportive communication has the potential to promote relationships among students. The challenge for higher education instructors is to make this a reality.

While most articles in Brock Education address education in institutional settings, we also welcome articles that explore other issues or adopt a different slant. “Autism Spectrum Disorder in Popular Media: Storied Reflections of Societal Views,” by Christina Belcher and Kimberley Maich, is interesting because it prompts readers to reflect on the representations of characters with ASD as typified by popular media. They explore how characters from TV, film and literature colour our views of people with exceptionalities. Although these media depictions are well-intended, their unwitting status as truth presents challenges for people with ASD and those who live and work with them.

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