

Editorial:

On diffraction, models, and investment: Exploring metaphor in teacher learning and professional development

Shawn Michael Bullock *

Simon Fraser University, Canada / University of Cambridge, U.K.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you, the reader, to this edition of *Teacher Learning and Professional Development*. As I mentioned in my inaugural editorial, the purpose of this journal is to provide a forum for increasing the scope with which we in the academy tend to talk about teacher learning, professional development, and teacher education. I also wish to extend sincere apologies to the authors of the articles in this issue. Although the bulk of their work was complete long before this issue came online, changes in my professional life interrupted my usual way of doing things and thus resulted in a delayed publication. I thank them for their patience during a challenging transition.

Cher Hill leads off this issue with an article that challenges us to think about whether the oft-used tool of reflective practice might need to be modified in light of work in new materiality studies. After expertly weaving through some recent work in this nascent field, Hill entreats us to consider what it might mean to become “diffractive” as a practitioner and as an educator. Conceptual metaphors matter, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) asserted, and Hill argues in part that the metaphor of diffraction helps us to move beyond *a priori* structures. We are encouraged to view “pedagogy as a diffractive apparatus wherein one of many potential realities was enacted” (p. 8). I am grateful indeed to have such exploratory and cutting-edge work submitted to this issue.

It is not at all uncommon to speak about models of teaching or, indeed, pedagogical models. Like many concepts in education, there is a certain intuitive sense of what these terms might mean—after all, it is difficult to imagine that any successful teacher is not using a particular model of what teaching and learning looks like in their particular classroom. Kellie Baker and Tim Fletcher take us several steps beyond the quotidian ideas of pedagogical models, however, with their examination of models-based practice in teacher education. Crucially, they acknowledge the complexity of teacher education created through the requirements that teacher candidates learn about multiple pedagogical models while also learning through their experiences with the models as learners. Their robust analysis of the intended and enacted curricula of a physical education teacher education course provides a useful touchstone for those of us who teach subject-based teacher education courses.

The terms “communities of practice,” and “communities of scholarship” are used frequently nowadays. Less frequent are serious considerations of the investments that are required to ensure that these terms function as more than convenient labels. A team from the University of British Columbia Okanagan comprised of Margaret Macintyre Latta, Sabre Cherkowski, Susan Crichton, Wendy Klassen, and Karen Ragoonaden consult an impressive range of literature to describe, interpret, and analyse an ongoing inquiry into their program. An underpinning conceptual

* Email: sbullock@sfu.ca

metaphor to their work is the prefix *re-*, which serves as a catalyst to *re*-trace prior assumptions, *re*-member the ways in which the program was designed, and *re*-story the narratives of those who work within an contribute to the program. Crucially, there the notion of re-peat is absent in their work, as the complexity of teacher education requires not repetition but *re*-examination. It is difficult to imagine a teacher education program that is not currently engaged in some sort of change; the work of Latta et al. can serve as an powerful model for how to challenge ourselves to develop our pedagogies of teacher education.

I have long been interested in the role of metaphor in communication and, in particular, the windows that metaphors provide into our thinking. I find it fascinating that each of the papers for this issue is, tacitly or explicitly, exploring a different conceptual metaphor for thinking about teacher learning and professional development. Taken together, we might think of the investment of time, effort, and thought required to use multiple lenses offered by diffraction for a thorough analysis of the multiple models of learning from and through experiences in a teacher education program. Darling-Hammond (2006) reminded us that complexity was one of the three major problems of learning to teach. The articles in this issue of TLPD shed light on possible ways to move through and with said complexity.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of *Teacher Learning and Professional Development*.

Respectfully yours,

Shawn Michael Bullock, Editor, TLPD
Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, U.K.
December 2017

References

Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). *Powerful teacher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.