

EDITORIAL*Patrick Lewis and James McNinch*

This will be the last issue of *Policy and Practice in Education* in its current format and under this current name. The journal is not ceasing publication; rather it is peeling off the title, which was born in an earlier time possessed with a particular focus and interest. In late 2007 the editorial board of the journal made the decision to move the journal into a digital format. The rationale was “in publishing research the intent is to reach as wide an audience as possible...[and] making knowledge more easily and broadly accessible suggested we look at open access publishing” (Lewis & McNinch, 2007, p. 5).

To that end, from our current .pdf, print-based format, we are continuing to evolve the journal such that the next issue will move more broadly into and across the digital landscape. In doing so, we will build upon and transcend the discussions, ideas and iterations of the past 15 years of the journal. The digital format will enable contributors to share works that travel outside the print-only format of traditional journals to include audio files, video files, images and links.

As we stated in our initial move to the digital format, the journal will continue to address issues, research and practice in the education of teachers. In the new journal, entitled *In Education*, (ineducation.ca) we envision discussions that also utilize the ubiquitous growth of the digital arts and sciences in the everyday practice of living and how that (in)forms both formal and informal education.

So, it is only fitting that this last issue of *Policy and Practice in Education* has several articles exploring issues and concerns specific to teacher education and practice. In “Towards a Professional Partnership Curriculum for Teacher Education,” authors Andrew Foran and Jeff Orr take readers through an innovative partnership program for preservice teachers with teacher unions. It is a partnership that explores professional literacy including the rights, roles, and responsibilities of teachers and teacher unions through “the construction and reconstruction of professional literacy.” But more importantly, the preservice teachers developed a deeper understanding of their professional identity through their perceived concern about external relevance and the willingness of the teacher educators to attend to those concerns. The authors discover that all three groups - preservice teachers, teacher unions, and teacher educators - need to listen to

each other and attend to the differing perceptions and needs of each group.

Connected with teaching practice and perception, Carolyn Pearson explores the ramifications of the No Child Left Behind legislation in the United States and the subsequent mandated standardization of curriculum and assessment. In “Teacher Perceptions of High-Stakes Testing” she explores the twists and turns from *high-stakes* to *low-stakes* testing across multiple state jurisdictions and variations of consequences and accountability - from teachers, schools, students and administrators. The author takes up the exploration of how this legislation has influenced the perceptions of classroom teachers and consequently shaped their attitudes and practice. Perhaps the most interesting finding by the author should come as no surprise, the teachers “in this study indicated they did change their curriculum to align with the test, did spend most of their instructional time in preparing for the test, and changed their teaching methods as a result.”

The third article has a close association with Pearson’s work as it looks at “Constructing Early Childhood Learning.” Julie DellaMattera explores how the No Child Left Behind legislation is impacting preschool education. However, she finds that many policies and guidelines in preschools do not align with NCLB standards in moving children toward a “school readiness” as narrowly defined by NCLB. She reminds us that we “must be concerned with the development of the whole child, reflect on individual and shared responsibilities for children, and commit to intentionally investing in young children’s futures.”

In the final article, Todd Gjevre, Larry Steeves, and Rod Dolmage examine the closing of small schools in many rural communities of the province of Saskatchewan and the subsequent ramifications of school consolidation. The authors note the historical trends of demographic shifts from a rural to a more urban population, which are often cited in “common sense” terms for closing small schools. However, it is not so simple as they demonstrate in a more focused and detailed examination of the data and the politics that seem to fuel the decisions to consolidate schools. Furthermore, they suggest that the real losers from closing small schools regardless of whether they are rural or inner-city schools, are the students. In the end, the authors conclude that policy and practice should serve one group above all others and that is the children and youth who make up the vast majority of the school communities.

