

## From the Editors

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Welcome to our first issue as the joint editors of *The Scottish Educational Review*. We would like to begin by thanking Donald and Laura for their service as editors, their excellent stewardship of the journal, and their thorough handover. We would also like to thank Caroline Maloney, our SER administrator, for seeing us through the transition period and making sure we kept on top of things.

In recognition of the 'strange times' in which our first issue appears, this edition opens with a discussion of what the Covid-19 pandemic might mean for educational research. A paper combining a series of reflections by the convenors of the networks within the **Scottish Educational Research Association** on the immediate impact of the disease (both practically and academically) is presented. Contributors offer some speculative comments on the long-term effects of the disease and the associated disruption. The chapter highlights both the scale of the disease's consequences and the capacity of the Scottish educational research community to respond to this impact.

Although mostly written before the emergence of the disease, the other articles in the edition pose timely questions for life in the 'new normal.' In their paper **Kennelly and Mouroutsou** use critical race theory to explore Scottish students' experiences of everyday racism. As data confirming the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds becomes overwhelming, the arguments they present invite us to consider what a racially just recovery from the pandemic might look like.

Similarly, the disruptive impact of the disease on practice in schools cannot be overstated. After a long period in which social-constructivist pedagogies and collaborative learning have been encouraged by policy makers, schools now find themselves sites of social-distancing and 'learning bubbles' in which such approaches become more challenging. Perhaps our experience of socially distanced schooling will occasion us to consider the importance of teaching as an affective and humanitarian endeavour. In this respect, **Harvie's** paper on interdisciplinary learning is a welcome and thought-provoking contribution to a form

of learning that is now officially demanded by the prescribed curriculum, but which is under-conceptualized and not yet established in practice.

**Cassidy, Holmes, Ferguson and Christie** report on a project aimed to support teachers' professional learning and leadership development through a collaborative and interactive school-based programme. In an education system that has formally revalorised teachers career long learning, the search for effective and practical avenues to support development has intensified. Notable elements of this engagement include the school as the place of formal professional learning, the co-creation of the programme content with universities and the participation of teachers across all levels of leadership. Evaluation of the outcomes from this project are encouraging and the opportunities it provided to engage in professional dialogue with peers are significant.

The membership, characteristics, formal structures, culture and mechanisms of reproduction that constitute Scotland's policy community have long been a necessary and under researched area of enquire in education. Walter **Humes** is peerless in his engagement with the leadership class in Scottish education and his examination of the establishment and operation of a number of new bodies within the Scottish Education system is a welcome recent addition to this literature. This new paper does an invaluable service by engaging critically with questions of governance, structures, institutional design, accountability and democracy in the post-devolution context. The parliamentary debates around Scottish education are explored by Morag **Redford** in her regular summary of education in the Scottish Parliament.

Together with book reviews by **Forde** and **Christie**, this issue shows that education in Scotland is an exciting field of research and study. However, the contributions to this journal show that while we remain true to our long service of educational research in Scotland, we also look to publish quality research of international interest. As editors, we continue to invite contributions which speak to both of these aspirations. Please continue to support the journal by submitting your work and by encouraging colleagues and partners to do the same.

## **SERA Networks: What might the Covid-19 Pandemic mean for educational research?**

### **The Editors**

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The emergence of the novel coronavirus which causes SARS-Covid-19 was both foreseeable and unexpected. The eventuality that a new disease would, at some point, cause death and disruption on a global scale was a certainty for which governments around the world had prepared (albeit with different levels of effectiveness). However, the successful containment of previous novel pathogens had, perhaps, engendered a false sense of security in the west. Facemasks, biosecurity measures and restrictions on social mixing were something that happened elsewhere.

Once the disease had taken hold in the UK, it did not take long for people to adapt to an entirely new vocabulary. 'Social-distancing', 'the rule of six' and 'support bubble' became commonplace phrases, as did the once-superfluous salutation to 'stay safe'. In the public sphere, commentary on the pandemic divided between those who spoke with unflinching certainty what the 'post-Covid world' would look like, and those who portended that that 'world would never be the same again', but declined to reveal how.

Researchers have the luxury of neither certainty nor vagueness. It is too soon to gauge the impact of the pandemic: not only are we in the midst of a second wave (albeit one which we are better equipped to manage) but things that seem epochal now may fade, while those that seem incidental may be the start of new paradigms. Good researchers know this and will not be drawn into prognostication; intellectual humility is, perhaps, the abiding academic virtue now.

We do not know what the world will look like five years from now and we cannot know the answers to the problems that we will face. At this point, all we can do is guess at the questions. As editors of the *Scottish Educational Review*, we invited each of the nine SERA Networks to submit a position paper with the title, 'What might the Covid Pandemic mean for [name of Network]'.

Here, seven of the eight SERA Networks do just that.