

EDITORIALS

Explorations in Genre Development

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It's uncontroversial to observe that exploration necessarily involves taking risks, experimenting with what we might otherwise take for granted. Likewise, we know that responsible exploration means attending to, and responding to, the situation in its full complexity and with its full history. It's nonetheless interesting to think through the implications of these points for explorations in abstract and concrete thinking. Exploratory thought is neither a fully theoretical exercise nor an exclusive focus on the practical.

Following Dewey's (1910/1997) distinction between the abstract and the concrete, thinking can be primarily directed toward simply more thinking or it can be the means toward some desired external end (p. 138), but what we are doing in education is trying to achieve a balance in these "mental attitude[s]" so that they develop "in easy and close interaction with each other" (pp. 143–144). All the articles in this issue seem attuned to this easy and close interaction in their own ways. From an editorial perspective, this commitment to balance has created interesting challenges to the traditional genre categories for this academic journal. It has been exciting to see the article categories expand or break off into new ones, as authors, reviewers, and the publications team have explored the possibilities beyond genre boundaries.

These explorations in genre development have coincided with my own uncertain ventures into participatory arts-based research in Hiroshima. Both have been experiences of constructive estrangement from the familiar, even that nuanced abstract–concrete dichotomy from Dewey. Jameson's (1999) interpretation of

Brechtian theater further complicates this binary, as it becomes difficult to distinguish if "the original play or text exists in order to provoke the theory and give it content, occasion, and raw material," that is, to serve as a means to more thinking, or if the theory is a tool for better performance, that is, serving as a means to an external end (p. 81).

As in my recent research collaborations, Brechtian rehearsals tend to dissolve into discussion and then restart with actors cycling into different roles. Thus, the stage becomes less a space for the realization of "pre-formed event" than a space for transformation through multiple analyses and reconstructions: "something new and as yet unnamed may emerge from the lexicon of the already classified" (Jameson, 1999, p. 65).

Similarly, *Explorations in Teacher Development (ETD)* genres such as Research Articles, Reflections, Explorations, Perspectives, and even Editorials might emerge as new reconstructions under existing names or new ones. Some articles reconstruct the genres in seemingly familiar ways, while others go so far as to inspire new category names, but in this issue, they all make fresh contributions to thinking—simultaneously abstract and concrete—about teacher development.

Contributions to This Issue

Glen Stewart and Hayo Reinders report on an action-research project that takes "active learning" as something much more than an overly familiar slogan or top-down policy. In addition to presenting and analyzing findings across multiple research cycles, they distill their

interpretations into recommendations for practice. Moreover, as many of the best research articles do, their paper models a careful exploration into taken-for-granted concepts and methods.

James Taylor investigates the often overlooked issue of teacher disability, specifically of teachers dealing with chronic illness. His article draws on the strengths of an insider perspective on a sensitive issue and puts original qualitative research in productive dialogue with multiple lines of scholarship. By illuminating the experiences of teachers with chronic illness, it offers the potential to expand conceptions of disability and perceptions of how teachers are affected.

Michael Ellis reexamines the admonition against teacher talk in his reflection on starting lessons with brief small talk, that is, lighthearted anecdotes that do not necessarily have straightforward learning objectives. This reflection blends narrative inquiry with a small mixed-methods classroom research study to suggest more nuanced ways of thinking about and using teacher talk.

Koji Osawa reflects on his experience of finding ways to scaffold in-class speaking performance in a distance-learning context. This reflection sheds light on the importance of the social scaffolding of communication, even when it is mediated by computer and even when it is initially asynchronous.

Bob Kobylack, William Kuster, and Andrew Pedersen share their exploration into enhancing teacher collaboration within a university department with familiar online tools, which have taken on even more importance in times of pandemic.

Junyuan Chen shares her deep, and necessarily deeply personal, exploration of the literature on language teacher identity.

Timothy Ang reports on his satisfactions and dissatisfactions with his experience of being a part-time teacher at multiple universities, and from this vital

lesser-heard perspective, makes the case for several possible improvements.

Other important contributions were the careful, constructive reviews from Deryn Verity, Chhayankdhar Singh, Ewen MacDonald, Daniel Hooper, Davey Young, Patrick Mannion, Yutaka Fujieda, Ryo Mizukura, David Bollen, Nate Olsen, and Nick Kasperek, as well as the proofreading of Andrew Hofmann and Nick Kasperek. Matthew W. Turner and Nick Kasperek contributed to the final layout, and Ewen MacDonald always goes above and beyond as Webmaster.

An Open Call for Papers

As this issue's articles across genres illustrate, *ETD* offers a scholarly outlet for researchers and practitioners who undertake a close and careful investigation into aspects of the work, thought, and continuous education of teachers, even when these scholarly reports may not fit easily into pre-formed categories. We welcome your submissions throughout the year, and we will work with you and peer reviewers toward publication in one of our two regular issues per year. "Beginner" authors—at all levels of experience—can find further guidance in the editorial for [Volume 27, Number 3](#) (Kasperek, 2021). Please submit your manuscript with a brief cover letter to the email address below.

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References

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