

New Waves—Educational Research & Development

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School Transformations and Challenges in the Rapid Changing World: Notes from the Editors-in-Chief

Jian Wang and Fanni Coward

Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2019 Special Issue, Volume 22 of *New Waves-Educational Research and Development* (NWERD)! In this special issue, with its theme of *School Transformations and Challenges in the Rapid Changing World*, five studies address two related topics central to the current theme. The first topic concerns with the changed needs in the context of student learning and ways to address those needs. The second topic is connected to the changed needs of teacher learning and ways by which these needs can be supported. Using different research methods, these five studies together approach the two topics with thoughtful and interesting results. Below are some of the highlights we gathered from the articles.

The rapid changing world demands schools to attend the emerging needs of student learning of various kinds. One of the emerging needs of student learning is that students are expected to be lifelong learners to deal with the demands of the rapid changing world (Gorard & Selwyn, 2005). In her study, *Identifying the Profile of a Potential Lifelong Learner*, Ng explores the relationship between levels of various lifelong learner characteristics including goal orientation, self-determination, mastery learning, autonomy, and academic achievement among secondary students in Singapore using a series of surveys.

Another changed need of student learning involves schools that are expected to support the learning of increased population of immigrant students, as a result of the global economy, social transformation, and political tensions and crises in the rapid changing world (Suarez-Orozco, 2007). In the literature review study, *Addressing the Needs of Refugee Students in School Environments*, Reinking addresses this issue by examining the literature related to refugee students and families in the United States to develop an understanding about how well U.S. schools offer the relevant training to teachers and staff, so that they adapt inclusive practices and asset-based mindset for teaching refugee students and working with their parents.

The rapid changing world further demands schools to prepare female students for career opportunities heavily relying on mathematics competence and where they have traditionally been underrepresented for the social equity and justice purpose (Volman & van Eck, 2001). Drawing on the performance data from TIMSS 2015 and Global Gender Gap Report 2017, the study by Ghasemi, Burley, and Safadel, *Gender Differences in General Achievement in Mathematics*, investigates mathematics performances differences between female and male students at fourth and eighth grade levels across 48 countries.

Schools have also become increasingly the central place that offers teachers various kinds of supports in learning to teach, in order to address the emerging needs of student learning (Brandsford & Darling-Hammond, 2005). One of such demanded school supports is to engage teachers in learning to teach students how to solve real life problems effectively (Lubienski, 2000). In the study, *Social Discourse Influencing Elementary Teachers' Cognition and Metacognition for problem solving in Open-ended Professional Development*, Hui-Chen and Ge analyze the interview and observation data to explore the impacts of a professional development workshop featuring on-going, collaborative and situated learning facilitated by the technological

environment, and to investigate the development of teachers' cognition and metacognition necessary for teaching ESL students how to solve real life problems.

Another demanded school support is to facilitate teachers' ability in learning to teach continuously with a focus on student learning by bridging their preservice, induction, and inservice stages of professional career (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). In their study, *Preservice Teacher Expectations of the Principal's Role in Teacher Induction*, Zhang, Liu, and Nishimoto use survey and interview data from a group of secondary preservice teachers to understand their expectations for school leadership support as they transition from preservice stage to induction stage of their teaching career.

We sincerely hope that you will find these five studies useful in enriching your thinking about the issues related to school transformations, and the challenges that such transformation brings to students and teachers. We also would like to take this opportunity to thank every reviewer for this special issue. Their thorough and constructive suggestions and comments enhanced the quality of our issue and made this issue possible. We and all the members of the Chinese American Educational Research and Development Association greatly appreciate your efforts.

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