

## **A new journal for teacher education: the journey from inspiration to perspiration to publication**

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TEAN – The Teacher Education Advancement Network – is the successor to ESCalate ITE (the Education Subject Centre of the Higher Education Academy, Initial Teacher Education section). It is a centre wholly dedicated to teacher education and is a collaborative initiative, mutually beneficial to teacher education providers and associated organisations across the four countries of the UK. We recognise the tremendous potential for all of us to work together to create a significant resource for the sector and, since TEAN's inception in 2009, we have looked for ways of encouraging colleagues to share their research and scholarly activity with the community. All papers discussing research or scholarly activity by teacher educators are considered by TEAN, and the Teacher Educators' Storehouse on the TEAN website ([www.tean.ac.uk](http://www.tean.ac.uk)) offers a way of sharing such papers with the sector. Papers for the Storehouse are edited by TEAN before being uploaded onto the website, and they form a valuable resource for the sector. However, we felt there was also a need to offer something more academically rigorous for our community and this is where the idea of a peer-reviewed online journal for the sector originated. The rationale for the journal is that we want, gradually, to present a teacher education journal of a standard comparable with other peer-reviewed journals. Why 'gradual'? Because a journal of this type needs time and patience to come together, and, in the frenetic world of teacher education, this is not something that can be rushed.

### **Process**

In June 2009 the journal began to take shape. The first imperative was to find a bank of experienced reviewers prepared to review for the new journal. Such was the interest in the journal that 27 colleagues came forward to review;

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these experienced reviewers offer a wide range of expertise and come from many different Higher Education Institutions at home and abroad.

A significant part of the philosophy behind TEAN is to promote teacher education research and help build a reputation of excellence. One way of doing this is by nurturing inexperienced colleagues to be successful in having their research papers accepted by their peers. Another way is to build up expertise in what is needed in an academic paper by engaging inexperienced reviewers in the process. It was unclear in the early stages as to whether anyone would reply to such a request, but the initial reaction turned out to be both gratifying and somewhat overwhelming, as the large number of responses suggested that this was indeed something with which the sector would like to engage. Over the next few months, the number of inexperienced reviewers settled to match the number of experienced reviewers and there are now 27 on the books.

An established way of going about helping inexperienced reviewers to review is to use a system of mentoring and there is scope for that within the TEAN process. However, because of the numbers involved, another more manageable system is also employed, using a variation of a type of 'buddy' system. Each paper is reviewed by experienced and inexperienced reviewers and the inexperienced reviewers have the benefit of sharing and comparing their ideas with the experienced reviewers. The whole process is very carefully monitored by TEAN and all documentation throughout the process is anonymised. TEAN offers another service to the inexperienced reviewers, which is to engage in dialogue with them over any difficulties or questions which may arise during the process.

Another feature of the TEAN journal is that it is constantly evolving and reacts to every piece of writing, reviewing and feedback which it receives. Thus the teacher education community is formulating its own journal in collaboration with TEAN, and all contributions of every type are valuable as we forge the path ahead together. It is, of course, hard to be unsuccessful, but there is

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genuine consolation in the very real value that is brought to the process by those learning to succeed; without the willingness of colleagues to contribute ideas and papers, the TEAN journal would not exist. One contributor sums up well the spirit behind the journal: 'As a beginning researcher I find the feedback very useful and hope to learn from this experience. I think the comments are generally fair and feel that I can address them and produce an article of improved quality'.

#### *The guidelines for the journal*

(<http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/TEAN/TEANJournal/TEANJournal.aspx>) have been rewritten, based on the experiences of the first few months. Time is always in short supply in teacher education, so the guidelines are now deliberately designed to save time for busy people, and, importantly, to save disappointment. This does not mean a slavish template to follow, but, rather, a structure into which you can inject flexibility whilst remaining on the right track for acceptance for the next issue.

#### **The future**

A challenge for TEAN has been to get the first issue published; without an example, it is difficult to inspire the continuation of an 'as yet' invisible journal. The future is now accessible to all. We have proposals in the pipeline for special issues which we are pleased to pursue, and colleagues have the inspiration of the first issue and the refreshed guidelines to persuade them that acceptance of a peer-reviewed paper for an academic journal is within their grasp. TEAN is committed to giving support and advice to all potential contributors; contact can be made through [tean@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:tean@cumbria.ac.uk). We look forward to the next steps in this fascinating, complex, but highly rewarding journey.

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