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Editorial

Welcome to the second issue of TEAN's Student Teacher Perspectives (STeP) journal. The quality of research undertaken by the student teachers who submit for the STeP journal shows a real understanding of the importance of research-based practice. There is real evidence here of a desire to know a bit more, to dig deeper; a positive dissatisfaction with the way things are, and a questioning approach to their own practice to find out if things could be better. It is hoped that other student teachers will engage with the SteP journal and think of submitting themselves, thus contributing to what the BERA Inquiry (2014) suggests is the way forward, in order to build the capacity for a self-improving education system. (BERA Final Report https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/BERA-RSA-Research-Teaching-Profession-FULL-REPORT-for-web.pdf) Many thanks to all our contributors and their tutors for the papers presented here.

To submit for the journal, it is important to refer to the guidelines on the STeP page of the TEAN website. We hope to welcome many authors to publish in STeP.

In this issue we have a wide range of topic areas:

In the first paper of this issue, **Kate Venner de Cortez from Cornwall SCITT** describes her research which considered whether the regular use of target language phonics reduces the dependence on class teachers in MFL (modern foreign languages) and therefore leads to greater independence in learning, without compromising the quality of new language acquisition. She concludes that the findings of her research would support the inclusion of explicitly taught phonics in MFL. It can enable greater autonomy in language learning as the student gains confidence and proficiency in the sounds, and can therefore learn new words and use them without recourse to their teacher.

Roisin O'Neill from St Mary's University College, Belfast investigates using ICT to promote Science in the World Around Us curriculum. Her main research questions were: to discover how much science is taught as part of the World Around Us curriculum; to ask what the barriers are, if any, to teaching science in primary school; to ask what the role of ICT in the promotion of science in the curriculum is; and to consider whether Fronter, a virtual learning environment, could promote science in the curriculum. Her research unearthed a decline of science specialist teachers and a general lack of teacher confidence, but that courseware like Fronter may have some benefit for the promotion of science in the World Around Us curriculum.

Hamish Arnold from the University of East London also looked at ICT, and his research project explores more generally the creative use of ICT among teachers. He found that most teachers feel confident using technology creatively only when there is a comparable analogue equivalent. Hamish suggests that the training that teachers get should give them opportunities to build their own understanding of technology in the classroom. In practice this would focus on the fundamentals of computing to give teachers the basic knowledge that they need in order to show

them the value of technology. This newly found understanding would give teachers the confidence to try new things, and synthesise their own approaches.

We now turn to **Julia Wickenden from the University of East London** to explore perceptions of the use of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in a primary school. In her project, she found that teachers tend to perceive IEPs of little value to the planning and teaching process, only consulting them as frequently as their school policy requires. In order to discover factors which may increase their value, Julia uses her findings to suggest that increased pupil involvement in target-setting would aid the effectiveness of IEPs, along with a reduction in the number produced. The project also found that, in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance, when the class teacher has greater involvement in the formulation of IEPs their perceived usefulness increases.

Finally this issue of the journal presents three papers from Northern Ireland, focusing on E in the primary school.
Aidan Forker from St Mary's University College, Belfast starts with an investigation into the relationship between physical activity and playground size. He warns that there is growing concern that playground activities are not given the recognition they deserve by teaching bodies as an important part of the holistic development of the child. Some fascinating results were forthcoming which, even if the small size of the project prevents conclusive data, do suggest how schools could utilise playground space in the most efficacious way and that female physical activity levels are most affected by smaller playgrounds. He discusses effective strategies shown to increase efficiency of playground space.

Ronan Sexton from St Mary's University College, Belfast conducted an investigation into whether there is a link between primary school children's physical activity levels and the time spent on screen based activity on a typical school day.
He discovered that children aged 8-11 spend an average 4.5 hours on screen based activity on a typical school day. The majority of this time was spent playing an I-pad or android with an average time of 63 minutes. Ronan strongly suggests that further research into the links between children's physical activity levels and time spent on screen based activity is needed.

Finally**, Daineal McBride from St Mary's University College, Belfast** focussed his investigation on the existing relationship between physical activity and levels of happiness in Key Stage Two pupils. Although he found that there was very little correlation between physical activity and levels of happiness in pupils in Key Stage Two, his research journey makes for engrossing reading; the factors in childhood that apparently lead to happy adults are intriguing. Daineal recommends that a study of similar design, but longer duration, is required before it would be possible to confidently assert that a child's physical activity might have a positive impact on their level of happiness.

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