
A Message from the Editor

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When considering the cover for this issue of *One World in Dialogue*, I continued to come back to a picture that evokes the Canadian spirit and care-free times, despite the harshness of our winters—a minor inconvenience when a hockey game awaits. With a break in the weather, what better to do than get

out on the lake and have a fast-paced game of hockey, overcoming the imperfect ice conditions. The players exemplify hope that the game will be great regardless of the obstacles. This seemed like an apt metaphor for the articles in this issue.

While our current media-rich milieu portrays seemingly endless possibilities, it also presents us with challenges in our daily and professional lives. We live in a time of VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity), a term initially used to describe the 1980s and then the post-Cold War world, and we are confronted with both persistent and new issues (such as human rights abuses, poverty, global conflicts, assaults on the rights of minorities, fake news and populism, among many others). Yet, as Walt Werner (2013, 260) notes, “Anyone who is a teacher is necessarily an optimist. Our working with young people represents a commitment to the future.” Werner advocates for hope as an incentive for learners and learning. He explains that “hope is a knowledgeable and reflective confidence in the future and a willingness to engage it” (p 260).

Through considering alternative world views, note van Kessel and Saleh (2020, 5), people can realize that their

preferred vision of the world—of what is hoped for—“might be arbitrary, and thus at least for a moment we lose our shield against our fears of impermanence.” While common and encouraged in our social studies classes, this, it seems, requires hope to address. In these VUCA times, hope alone is not the panacea, notes Werner (2013)—but hope based on knowledge and reason can be.

This issue of *One World in Dialogue* seeks to provide insight into issues that teachers confront, not just in their classrooms but in the professional context of their craft. These issues are persistent and have a significant impact on both preservice education and practising teacher experience. They are the engine that shapes our pedagogic content knowledge—the instructional practices we use, the content we teach, the resources we select, our understanding of our students and our interactions with colleagues. The articles from across Canada offer the necessary conceptual frameworks and insights into how we can appraise these issues and develop a reasoned vision for hope.

To begin, Charlene Creamer Melanson explores the notion of neoliberalism—a pernicious ideological invader from the VUCA world. Melanson, a high school English teacher in New Brunswick, provides background into the rise of neoliberalism and its impact on educational policy and practice. Hope is offered as a civic virtue that seeks to ensure that our schools remain sites where the common good is nurtured so that we can return to living in a society with a market economy rather than in a market society.

Curriculum is likely the most controversial issue in Alberta’s education landscape. In her article, Paula Bye examines Manitoba’s social studies curriculum. At the time of writing, she was an elementary school teacher in Manitoba and was working on a master’s degree specializing in curriculum and instruction. With her eclectic

background—including teaching in the north, where wandering polar bears meant school closure, and in eastern European villages, where grape harvests resulted in the same—Bye offers insights informed by the scholarly consideration of guiding principles developed to improve curricular outcomes. Such an approach offers Alberta teachers knowledge and a heuristic to understand our province’s current and proposed curriculum models.

Jennifer Magalnick, associate director of Holocaust Education and Community Engagement for the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, undertakes a systematic review of Holocaust education, providing strong insight into this long-discussed but rarely addressed concern. This article is timely, as recent research by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Center for Antisemitism Research (2023, 6) found that “85 percent of Americans believe at least one anti-Jewish trope”—a significant increase over the past four years. Magalnick’s article provides the knowledge and reasoning for a rich understanding of the Holocaust that can be used to counter antisemitic beliefs, as well as offering hope for a fairer and more just world in a time of uncertainty and volatility.

We conclude with research from Andrew Gilbert, Jonathan L Roque, Annelise M Lyseng and Karissa L Horne, in collaboration with University of Lethbridge professor Kerry B Bernes. The authors constructed a series of Grade 10 social studies lessons that integrated career-planning skills and assessments. Seeking to engage students in considering their futures, they used a variety of methods to explore the efficacy of the lessons in helping students consider career options. The Alberta government recently created a Career Education Task Force to seek ways to prepare students for postsecondary studies or employment. However, the integrated approach these researchers used illustrates that existing school subjects can include knowledge, values and skills directly related to career planning, which can make students’ choices after high school seem less daunting and can perhaps offer a degree of hope in a world characterized by VUCA.

References

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