

# Editorial – Fostering Innovation in Educational Research and Practice in Wales

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When we first took over as editors in issue 23(1) in 2021, we stated that ‘this issue represents the next step in the journal’s evolution’ (Beauchamp, Crick and Thomas, 2021, p. 3). At the risk of reiterating ourselves, *this* issue represents the next step in the journal’s evolution. With support from colleagues at the University of Wales Press, we focused initially on content and quality (which will, of course, continue), then introduced a new online website and submissions system, but it is now time to consider presentation and style too. This issue contains two small, but significant, changes from practice established in the earliest days of the journal; in part, acknowledging the shifting nature of scholarly publishing (Tennant et al., 2019), but also post-pandemic educational research, policy and practice in Wales (Thomas, Crick and Beauchamp, 2023). Firstly, when listing the authors at the start of the articles, we will no longer add academic titles to avoid perceived hierarchies and power structures, acknowledging that all authors make equally valid contributions. Secondly, the typeface and typesetting used in the journal has been changed for the first time since the journal’s inception to reflect a more modern format and style, more in keeping with the journal aims, as well as other academic journals in our discipline.

In our first edition we also asserted that the ‘bilingual, multi- and inter-disciplinary research we publish will be theoretically grounded, methodologically robust, rigorously analysed, and with findings that will find applications in educational settings across Wales, at all ages and in all sectors’ (Beauchamp, Crick and Thomas, 2021, p. 3). We contend that we are achieving this, but we would also like to encourage a greater diversity of methods in the articles submitted. In a study of education entries to the UK’s Research Excellence Framework (REF) which last took place in 2021, Inglis et al. (2024, p. 2495) suggest that research in education (at

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least in terms of outputs submitted to the REF) has become 'less qualitative and more quantitative over time'. To date, however, submissions to the *Wales Journal of Education* (WJE) are almost exclusively qualitative and very often adopt a narrow range of methods e.g. interview and focus groups. We fully accept that these methods can be theoretical, methodologically robust and rigorously analysed, but we would also like to encourage submissions that explore new methods. We acknowledge that 'it is not possible to give a definitive and exhaustive list of social and educational research Paradigms' (Hammersley, 2012), but we suggest that there are many methodologically robust research methods that are not being used or formally published at present in Wales. To encourage exploration – and perhaps even provoke debate – in this issue we include an article that uses *currere* as a research method. The pioneer of the method, William Pinar (2017, p.1), explained: 'The Latin infinitive of curriculum – *currere* – I invoked in 1974 to emphasize the experience of curriculum, lived embodied experience that was structured by the past while focused on the future'. Although it may be new to many, *currere* thus has a long history, and in Wales the *Curriculum and Pedagogy Collaborative Research Network* (CRN) – one of four CRNs funded by Welsh Government<sup>1</sup> – have run a series of retreats (see Smith, 2024) using this method to reveal

how delving into *currere* helps educators share and reflect honestly and powerfully and allows them to take stock of the personal power of their life experiences to shape the way they think of curriculum and teaching and students on a day-to-day, moment-by-moment basis (Poetter, 2024, p. 52).

We hope you continue to support the WJE with existing methods, but we also issue a challenge to explore how we can approach educational research in Wales to reveal new insights 'in Wales, from Wales, and for Wales' (Beauchamp et al., 2022, p. 1). This extends further to our *Focus on Practice* collection<sup>2</sup>, which features shorter articles investigating high-quality and impactful practice, wherever and however it takes place.

Finally, we would like to thank again the authors of the WJE Special Issue (26:2) *Twenty-Five Years of Devolved Education in Wales: A Review* (see Davies and Beauchamp, 2024). In the short time since it was published, it has had very

1 Curriculum and Pedagogy, Leadership and Professional Learning, Welsh Language and Bilingual Education; Equity and Inclusion.

2 See: <https://journal.uwp.co.uk/wje/site/focus/>

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impressive views and download figures suggesting that the edition was both timely and will hopefully provide a unique snapshot of a critical moment in time for education in Wales.

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