

Educational research in the Global North and South; reflections on the field and future directions

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We are delighted to have been appointed as the new Editorial Team for the *British Educational Research Journal* (BERJ). As we embark on this new challenge, we would like to reflect here on our aspirations and ambitions for the journal over the coming four years of our tenure.

We recognise that BERJ occupies a unique position as a diverse yet broad and inclusive education journal that seeks to engage with research from across the global south and north to better understand how education is enacted. Contextually reflexive, the depth and breadth of qualitative and quantitative empirical studies captures the challenges and opportunities for quality education across different stages from early years to higher education, including formal, informal and lifelong learning. We note the successes of the outgoing team in broadening conceptualisations of education research, with careful attention paid to social justice concerns (Wainwright, Aldridge and Biesta, 2023).

Here we outline our vision for the journal over the next four years. We also outline some of the key areas that already are, and likely to become more of, a driving force for the field of education research during our editorship. Our vision and commitment to the journal over the next four years is informed by our commitment to:

Sustain quality

We will work hard to sustain the already-strong international profile of the journal and its reputation for publishing high-quality articles. This is at the core of our vision and will not be compromised by any of our other plans or external forces. We will continue to support BERJ as the flagship journal for the British Educational Research Association (BERA), which we regard as a distinctive strength. We remain committed to the role of BERJ in developing Education as a discipline (with implications of social justice issues that relate to other disciplines and fields, such as the medical sciences, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and environmental pedagogies), as well as in decolonising knowledge, embracing epistemic diversity from marginalised voices and disadvantaged identities, and their forms of epistemic resistance, and promoting discussions around how we work as knowledge producers and address power relations in/through educational research.

Promote knowledge of UK education systems in contexts of internationalisation

Whilst adhering to the UK focus of BERJ, we appreciate the previous editorial team's efforts to improve the international scope of the journal. One of our priorities will be to build on and extend this work. This commitment will be further developed into discussions on the future of UK education in contexts of internationalisation, global challenges, AI and digital/ post digital technologies. We are also keen to facilitate articles that examine situated theoretical and empirical knowledge that UK education can learn from.

Further diversify contributors to BERJ

To support the further internationalisation of the journal, we plan to encourage high-quality contributions from diverse groups of researchers, in terms of their locations, social backgrounds, career stages and fields of interest. Here we also seek diversity of methodologies, theories and conceptual research that extends our knowledge of education research. Innovative and disruptive approaches to academic writing are also welcome, recognising the potential for new ways of conducting and disseminating education research to push the discipline forward.

Diversify audiences

We will take a number of measures to broaden the audience of the journal and increase its readership. Some of these outcomes will result from the efforts to internationalise the journal outlined above. In addition, we will work to further increase the visibility of BERJ at international conferences and through social media presence. We will also continue to negotiate more open-access strategies to enable readership from those who do not currently have access to the journal, including some groups of practitioners currently underrepresented (e.g. in the early years, teachers and youth workers).

Support the next generations of researchers in UK education

In alignment with BERA's strategic plan to support the next generations of researchers in education, we regard *BERJ* as an important venue in this regard. We aim to utilise the journal for capacity building in terms of academic publishing and peer reviewing, particularly for UK-based researchers and those with connections to UK education. By delivering workshops throughout our tenure, there will be active support for early career researchers to better understand the publishing process and expectations in relation to quality.

The previous team have reflected on their tenure of the journal (Biesta, Wainwright and Aldridge, 2023), noting the demands created by the business model that dominates journal publishing. They also note the challenge of moving between academic and practitioner 'bubbles' and the need to work across these to enhance the quality of the field. At the centre of these issues are the associated ethical dilemmas around what constitutes quality research and how it is presented, with the need to resist a dominant model of an academic article. Such moves stifle creativity, knowledge production and knowledge transfer.

Reflecting on where BERJ is now and looking forward to how it can develop, some areas for future directions during our custodianship of BERJ are as follows:

1. AI and education

Acknowledging the dominance of new and emerging AI technology, we are keen to see research that engages with the benefits and constraints for a wide range of education settings. AI has the potential to fundamentally change pedagogy, curriculum content, and knowledge production. Here we also note the risks AI poses to academic publishing through potential automation of peer review, a move we will continue to strongly resist.

2. Climate and sustainability education

The ongoing climate challenges have been recently noted by scientists claiming that the 'world will look back at 2023 as year humanity exposed its inability to tackle climate crisis' (Guardian, 2023) while COP 28 in Dubai finally agreed to transition away from fossil fuels in 'a just, orderly and equitable manner'(UNFCCC, 2023); the need for global approaches to sustainability education are paramount. Whilst governments across the Global North and South are attempting, with differing degrees of impact, to address climate change, there remains very much more to do to ensure a sustainable future for the planet.

3. Gaming education and students' use of game culture in institutional contexts

Game culture, described as shared social practices and a shared identity/community created in the gamespace (Taylor, 2006), has an important role in the lived experiences of youth globally. Game culture often cuts across diverse socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and as such has the potential to enable or limit inclusive learning environments. Whilst some academic buzz has engaged with game culture, there remains limited understanding of its uses in educational contexts.

4. Gender and intersectionality

The United Nations' Post-2015 agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will reach its critical year of 2030 in meeting the targets for the 17 goals. Recognizing that reducing inequalities (SDG 10) needs an intersectional approach to understand and disrupt persisting social structures that manifest gender, racial, class, and many other forms of inequalities; we particularly draw attention to the role of quality education (SDG 4) in achieving gender equality (SDG 5) through working towards equity for women, girls, and other marginalised genders. We would welcome educational research pieces that critically engage with the SDGs on the topics of gender and intersectionality, and that advance gender-inclusive and -sensitive education across the life course.

5. Special, additional needs and inclusive education

Debates about how to include persons with additional needs in inclusive educational settings continue unabated, particularly in contexts where resources are scarce or education budgets have been cut, educator morale is low, and systems are under extreme pressure. The scale of need and complexity of issues, particularly the mental health of young people and children, have been worsened by Covid 19, while parents and young adults struggle to get appropriate statements and must endure long waiting times for diagnoses (see, for example, McMurray, 2021). Substantial inequalities in access to, and in outcomes of education at all levels persist. We encourage research that explores the extent and consequences of these persistent inequalities, mitigating interventions, and theoretical developments.

6. Teachers and teacher education

The global shortage of highly qualified teachers is an ongoing challenge (UNESCO, 2023), yet may manifest in different forms in contexts such as the UK; where teacher education and teacher recruitment are undergoing crisis in the current UK policy contexts (Brooks,

McIntyre, & Mutton, 2023; Innes, Murtagh, & Gregory, 2023). The lived experiences of teachers and their wellbeing working in education matter. It thus motivates us to prioritize the advancement of knowledge about teachers and teacher education through education research across the globe.

7. Internationalisation of higher education

The increasing pressure to internationalise higher education for economic sustainability has created new directions for provision. More research is needed to understand how this agenda both in the UK and internationally has reshaped institutional priorities, affected the development of curriculum and intercultural communication, and reinforced and created new inequalities.

These topics are by no means the only ones we plan to focus on; rather, they are a departure point for our editorship and a way of opening up both familiar and emerging areas of social enquiry. Underpinning our aspirations and vision for the journal is the diversity within the team, which will enable us to offer a unique combination of experiences to *BERJ*, particularly in terms of our backgrounds, geographical representation and editorial experience. Our aim is to build on the successes of our editorial predecessors to sustainably maintain and further develop *BERJ* as a publisher of high-quality educational research and as a leader in the field of education-related journals.

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