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Editorial

The launch of any new academic journal is an exciting, if at times rather daunting, process. Those of us who have been involved in seeing *Educate* through from its inception to the production of this first issue have found ourselves asking many questions along the way. Why, when the library shelves are already full of journals specialising in education research of all kinds, do we need another one, particularly one whose authors are current or recent doctoral students? What part do we want the journal to play in the life of the doctoral research community at the London University Institute of Education? And what has that doctoral research community to offer to the wider community of educational researchers, via the pages of *Educate - The London Journal of Doctoral Research in Education*?

A glance through the sample list of more than 30 completed doctoral theses at the Institute in the academic year 2000-2001 may be a good place to start answering these questions. The list - which you can see on pages 5 and 6 - reflects the astonishing breadth and depth of doctoral research taking place here at the London University Institute of Education. Every phase of schooling, as well as education in the non-formal sector, is represented. So, too, is every continent in the world. Perhaps what is most strikingly evident, though, is the range of theoretical frameworks underpinning these successful doctorates. The doctoral research currently in progress matches this list in its diversity of content and approach. This is a major strength, and provides *Educate* with an eclectic and highly original body of material on which to draw.

Whilst we hope that *Educate* will provide a snapshot of some of the doctoral research in progress and recently completed at the Institute of Education, we hope it will do more than that. The size and diversity of the research student community - about 600 people - is both a strength and a challenge for those who are involved with doctoral study here. There are full-time and part-time, home and international students, studying for the professional doctorates of EdD and DEdPsy as well as the longer-established MPhil/PhD. Some are practitioners in education and education-related professions, some are retired, and some are recent graduates from first and masters' degree courses. As students and as staff we have much to learn from each other, but it can be difficult to begin, and

to sustain, the conversations that would support that learning. In recent years, the Institute's Doctoral School has established a number of contexts for such conversations, with the introduction of annual conferences and poster events, and through reading and discussion groups. *Educate* is intended to provide another forum for dialogue amongst doctoral researchers: a showcase for some of the research taking place, and a means towards developing engagement with each others' work, both amongst and beyond the doctoral research community.

Setting up a new journal with these intentions allowed us to think imaginatively about how best to promote the learning of doctoral students, and to see the journal as both process as well as finished product. As education researchers, we wanted to be able to think about how *Educate* could work as an example of pedagogic, as well as traditionally academic, good practice. Doctoral students and recent graduates of the Institute of Education are at the heart of the journal - as contributors, as editorial board members, and as peer referees alongside staff referees. There have been notable successes along the way, with the active involvement of a substantial number of doctoral students in the refereeing and editorial processes. In the next issue, we would like to build on our aim to facilitate the inclusion of work by students at relatively early stages of their doctoral study by particularly encouraging submissions under 'research notes' and 'critical review' categories. These categories present an almost unique publication opportunity for those who would like to share work in progress, so we hope that people who are not yet ready to present fully-fledged papers will continue to send us their contributions. We also welcome responses to articles published in this edition of *Educate*, so that the second and subsequent issues can build on discussions opened here.

In early discussions about the journal, we decided to ask contributors to preface their work with a short contextualisation of their field of enquiry. In the increasingly specialised world of educational research, we felt this was essential. *Educate* explicitly sets out to be a non-specialised educational research journal, and intends to enable researchers from a range of conceptual backgrounds to communicate with each other across specialist boundaries. This is not to say that we expect always to agree with each other, particularly when we speak across profound theoretical and ideological differences, when we have differing concerns, and when even our notions of what counts as knowledge

may be at odds. Neither do we ignore the fact that differences cannot be neutral, situated as they always are in hierarchical power relations. We hope, though, that in this journal, we will be able to engage productively with such differences, and come to a better understanding of those that cannot be resolved. One of the most exciting aspects of doctoral study at the University of London Institute of Education is this opportunity to engage with a spectrum of standpoints. We hope that *Educate* will both reflect and enhance the excitement of such engagement.

This issue begins with the *Research Notes* section in which John Durrant and Jackie Laluvein discuss some of the methodological and substantive issues arising from their work in progress. John Durrant explores the salience of power relationships in an LEA context, whilst Jackie Laluvein is concerned with power in parent-teacher relationships. In the *Research Papers* section, Shereen Benjamin begins by tracing the history of the discourses that have underpinned 'special' education from its inception in the 1850s, arguing that these discourses inscribe varying - but always deficit - models of intellectual disabilities. Andrea Kelly looks at the notion of apprenticeship in the context of contemporary NHS surgeons, and discusses alternative, socially-situated, theoretical perspectives. Judy Lever-Chain's paper addresses the very current issue of boys' literacy development by looking at the effect of age of entry to school on boys' subsequent attitudes to reading. Viv Moriarty is also concerned with a pressing current issue - that of social inclusion - and this paper discusses some of the findings of the evaluation of a Family Learning Programme which aimed to facilitate social inclusion in an inner-city locality. The next paper is a discussion of English secondary school music teachers' views of creativity, and Oscar Odena takes the opportunity to explore methodological issues arising from his study. Lastly, Ron Smith uses his work on institutional 'effectiveness' in the context of peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland to argue for alternatives to the received model of school effectiveness and school improvement.

We hope you enjoy reading this first issue of *Educate*, and we hope it is the start of many productive conversations. At the beginning of this editorial we asked three questions. Firstly, we asked whether yet another journal of educational research could be necessary. Our answer is that this is a unique journal, not simply because of the breadth of interests and experiences of its potential range of contributors. It also provides a context within which people with differing investments in research - including those who are new to it, those for whom

research is a once-in-a-lifetime activity, and those who are established and experienced - can share each other's work. Then we asked what part we wanted *Educate* to play in the life of its host institution, the University of London Institute of Education. The Institute of Education takes public pride in the strength of its 'research community', and yet, for many doctoral students, that 'community' can seem rather intangible. We hope that *Educate*, along with other innovations, will enable more of us to have a sense of a research community, and to feel ourselves a part of it, by coming to know something about each other's thoughts and concerns. Lastly, we asked what our journal, and our research community, can offer the wider research community. Our hope for *Educate* is that it will continue to develop and grow. Whilst the London Institute of Education will continue to be its base, and our commitment to providing publication and editorial opportunities for students at all stages of the research process will remain unchanged, we intend, in time, to include doctoral students and established academics who are not necessarily based here at the Institute. *Educate* is a truly collaborative journal, in which researchers with very varied amounts of research and practitioner experience can work and learn alongside each other: this is, we believe, a truly distinctive offering to the wider research community.

As is the case for all journals, our success will depend on the continuing willingness of potential contributors to provide us with interesting, thought-provoking and engaging material. We think that *Educate* has made a good start, and we hope that, having read the articles, you will agree. We would like to thank very warmly all those who have submitted work, whether or not it has been accepted for publication in this issue. The second issue is now in preparation, so please do keep sending your work to us. We would like to close by thanking all those who have generously given their time and energy in many ways, from refereeing articles to providing the training and support that we, as a novice editorial team, have found invaluable. We feel confident and optimistic that, having made such a good start, and with the support of so many people, *Educate* will be able to take its place amongst the best journals of education research.

The Editorial Board
December 2001