



Editorial

Carmel Borg

January-June 2014 has been a very eventful period for the MRER project. The *MRER Lecture Series* was launched in January. Since then, a number of lectures were delivered by local and international scholars on subjects that ranged from adult skills inequality across countries to socially-committed institutions of higher learning. The editorial team is currently working on the first monograph in the *MRER Monograph Series* and, later this year, MRER will launch the first courses in the *MRER Short Courses Series*.

While the MRER project continues to expand, the main deliverable will continue to be the Malta Review of Educational Research - a peer reviewed, international, open-access journal, published twice yearly. The present issue is general in nature. It follows a special issue (vol.7. no2.) on Migration and Education and precedes a special issue (vol.8 no.2) on Education and the Expressive Arts. Vol.8 no.1 includes five papers, two book reviews and, for the first time, two commentaries.

The papers featured in Vol.8 no.2 provide insights into the complex and powerful nature of education provision. Sharon Micallef Cann and Doreen Spiteri explore the immigrant students' perceptions of Malta's two official languages as immigrants struggle to come to terms with a linguistic milieu that is often disempowering rather than enabling.

Marilyn Clark and Carmel Cefai investigate the schooling experiences of young people who have become habitual offenders. Negative school experiences and adjustment, engagement in truancy and labelling within the school context are some of the themes which emerged from the students' narratives.

Krista Debra Mohr shares an example of good practice in the area of English language learning. The project, which partnered Maltese with American teenagers, suggests that cultural exchange could motivate students in their last stages of their secondary education to improve their English language skills.

Milsoh Raykov and Alison Taylor analyse a survey of 525 students who took a community-service learning course between 2005 and 2012 at the University of Alberta, Canada. Analysing gender differences, the research yielded a number of significant gender differences, including motivations for participation in CSL courses, the nature of involvement within the community and reasons for recommending such an experience.

In the last paper of this issue, Vasilios Oikonomidis provides a critical analysis of compulsory preschool education for 5-year-old children, instituted by law in Greece in 2006. Against a comparative backdrop of similar provision in other European countries, the paper gives a general critical overview of the voices in favour and against compulsory preschool education in Greece.

As from the present volume, MRER is providing space for activists, academics and professionals to comment on issues related to education. In one of the commentaries, Michael Buhagiar and Deborah Chetcuti reflect on current proposals for change in the practicum component of initial teacher education within the Faculty of Education, University of Malta. In the other commentary, John Grech converses with Valerie Walkerdine on space, place, social justice and education.

Finally, Vol. 8 no.2 is also featuring a number of book reviews. Topics of the three book reviews include: emotional literacy in Primary schools; Paulo Freire's literary contribution; and recognition vs merit pay for the best teachers.

The range of topics covered by the present issue is a reflection of the editorial policy of MRER – blending special issues with general issues that cover a wide range of educational themes. General issues address the growing demand for good quality papers to be published by MRER. In fact, such growing demand may result in the publication of supplement issues of the journal, as anticipated by the editorial policy. Meanwhile, the administrative indications are very encouraging, pointing at high visibility and equally high level of readership. The future of MRER is solid.