Editorial

At a meeting earlier this year our CSEA executive felt it was time to embrace electronic technology. Thus this issue inaugurates our move to an online format, one that adopts an open-access policy. We wish to acknowledge the generous assistance of the Scholarly Communications unit of McGill Library for their guidance in helping us get this issue launched. There are a number of advantages to this move. Perhaps the most important is that the open-access online version will make our authors more accessible to a wider audience. Further, over the next few months, earlier issues of CRAE, dating back to its beginnings, will be uploaded onto the site. So readers looking for particular themes will soon be able to access everything that CRAE has produced on given topics. The move online also increases our format options. For example, we can include more colour imagery than we could afford otherwise.

The transition has meant that we had to learn a whole new set of communication skills, so this issue is appearing later than usual, but reader patience will be rewarded. In this issue we have a range of themes, but unifying threads run through them.

Richard Lachapelle's article provides a historical overview of an artist-in-residence program that lasted almost twenty years within one school board. The situation was unique to its time and place. While artist-in-residence programs do exist today they are usually confined to university settings where funding is a little more flexible than it is within school boards. More common in public schools is the arrangement of having artists work with the regular teachers, but these artists are visitors, not residents. An example in Canada is ArtsSmarts, which runs programs across Canada, funded by a coalition of partners.

A variation on the artist-in-residence model is arguably community-based art education (CBAE). Here, the focus moves from the public school to the community. This is the topic of Susan Whiteland's article in which she describes a community-oriented project that involved a group of art education majors who created a mural in a local hospital. Their work was part of the requirements for an independent-studies course in art education.

Heather McLeod, Morgan Gardner and Elizabeth Yeoman also discuss a university-level course, in their case a graduate-level course in a Faculty of Education. In their case, the focus of the course was on developing a sense of self-identity as educators. While not all students had backgrounds in the arts, a key contributor to that development was the requirement that participants involve some component of the arts—music, visual art, drama, media or literary writing—in a creative final project. The article discusses the learning opportunities and challenges that the course afforded.

In a move from the university setting to a community workshop for artists and teachers, Jesse Stong describes another orientation to self-identity development. In this case the author used life-writing exercises to help participants integrate their personal and professional experiences into meaningful artistic expressions of self-definition.

It is fair to say that Sheryl Smith-Gilman's article is yet another that addresses self-identity. In this case, her focus is on First Nations early childhood education. Given Canada's sad history of residential schools and the tragic consequences of that assimilationist effort, identity is a topic of concern to First Nations people. Sheryl's contribution to the nurturing of a cultural identity was her introduction of the Reggio Emilia approach to develop a culturally relevant curriculum for the young students.

A substantial part of indigenous culture has to do with care for the land that has supported a way of life for perhaps thousands of years. So it is that we complete this issue with Zuzana Vasco's article in which she addresses how art education, or more specifically eco-art education, with an emphasis on holistic education—the integration of body, mind, affect and spirit—can contribute to ecological awareness. Ecology may well become the most important, and imperiled, topic in education in the twenty-first century.

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