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Foreword

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Welcome to the third issue of the International Journal for Transformative Research. The process of creating and developing this journal is an interesting and exciting one, involving considerable learning for ourselves as Editors. We always knew this would be the case, of course. We began this initiative, wanting to encourage researchers, who were creating knowledge grounded in their own practice, to explore and analyse the transformative influence on themselves and others. This is a new approach to engaging with research. As the journal develops, we aim to deepen our understanding and practice of what it means for a researcher to experience a transformative shift in the values, attitudes and actions as a consequence of their inquiry, and learn more about the behaviours and relationships that have a transformational influence on individuals, groups, organisations, or on the wider communities to which they belong. We welcome contributions from academics and professionals who are willing to join with us in this exploration.

In the first paper in Issue 3, Sigrid Gjotterud, Erling Krogh, Cecilie Dyngeland and Solomon Mwakasumba give a fascinating account of how a small action can lead to major change; in this context, how the gift of a goat can lead to the transformation of many lives. Solomon, a member of the local community, recognised the potential that ownership of a goat might have in providing the means to enable teenage orphans to thrive. Initially through the production of milk, they and their families were better nourished; but in the longer term, the benefits of being part of a project group had unexpected consequences which led to a much wider enrichment of the orphans and their families. The authors tell the story of

this process, which finally had a transformative influence on the researchers themselves as they engaged in a participatory process of community development which had the young orphans at the centre.

In the second paper, Sonja Schaal, Steffen Schaal and Armin Lude of Ludwigsburg University of Education detail their research project 'BioDiv2Go' (Biodiversity to go) which aims to create sensuous experiences and an appreciation of biodiversity using mobile technology. BioDiv2Go was developed in a transdisciplinary consortium combining expertise in biological education, in applied computer sciences and with expertise in dissemination with adolescents. The paper documents the transformative developmental process from the initial theoretical framework towards the final version, which involved multiple perspectives working with educational staff, experts in environmental science and psychology as well as with adolescent representatives.

In the third paper Jocelyn Jones, formerly a social worker in England and now a social work consultant gives her account of working with young people in need of protection. Through telling the story of Graham, an eight-year old boy who has been taken into residential care, she explores the nature of the relationship required, if a professional is to provide the kind of support a child needs to transform their life from being the victim of neglect and abuse, to one where they are able to flourish as a trusting young person with a positive sense of identity and self-esteem. Grounded in a participatory world view, Jocelyn argues the case for a sensory approach to understanding professional connection and disconnection with children who may be victims of abuse.

In the fourth paper, Charlotte Haines Lyon, a PhD student, writes about her exploration of Community Philosophy as a tool for critical parental engagement in a primary school. She engages in a critical analysis of the first cycle in her doctoral action research, where she moves away from believing that her role as a facilitator of participatory action research is to enable the transformation of participants through conscientization. Instead, after an analysis of power relations, she comes to the conclusion that, rather than trying to take responsibility

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for changing the parents' views, she should instead see herself as working alongside them in a co-construction of knowledge. Transformation for Charlotte becomes a shared process of change that involves herself, individual participants and the whole group of participants with whom she is working. Positioning herself as a researcher using Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005) four chronotypes of research help her to reflect on and progress her ideas and thinking.

In the fifth paper, Margaret Farren, Yvonne Crotty and Laura Kilboy of Dublin City University (DCU) present two enquiries from teacher-researchers who participated in a Masters professional development programme. The paper documents how both teachers embarked on a cycle of identification of an area in which they experienced concern; they investigated existing literature in the area, designed actions to address the concern and reflected on the outcomes, modifying plans in light of the evaluation and submitting their accounts to a validation group. Both teachers not only acquired new skills in ICT through their

participation in the Masters programme, but also engaged with innovative practices, informed by their values, and successfully embedded ICT into their own teaching by integrating technology into the classroom in a collaborative way that transformed the teaching and learning process.

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References

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