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Editorial by Dr James Underwood

An issue focusing on 'community' is appropriate indeed vitally needed, this year, if the *Polish Journal of Educational Studies* is to continue its 66 year history of being engaged in the most current debates that run within and alongside our field of education. The articles presented here certainly fulfil that need.

Current debates both inside and outside education at present have 'community' at their heart once layers of practice or policy have been peeled back. This issue of the *Polish Journal of Educational Studies*, with its theme of 'community', comes at a point in time when communities are being disrupted by forces beyond individual control including most tragically war outside Europe and the resulting movements of peoples. Debates about community coherence, community building and re-building and about community relationships have dominated the news worldwide. There are a significant number of British authors presented here, more than in any previous edition, and these have been writing at a time when the country has begun the process of leaving an international community, the European Union, that it has been part of for over 40 years.

Radical changes in community have not though all been contentious or marked by dramatic ruptures. Widespread access to the internet is dated in most countries from the mid-1990s. There is no world-wide fixed anniversary but for many places around the world in 2020, it will be roughly 25 years since the internet first entered the lives of ordinary people. It is also timely then that this edition should address through the lens of community the implications of this so far and the potential implications looking forward.

It is noticeable that this is by far the most international of any issue of the *Polish Journal of Educational Studies*. It includes writers whose heritage or current professional communities are Albanian, American, British, Chinese, Hungarian, Italian and Vietnamese as well as articles by Polish writers. It is the second edition of the *Polish Journal of Educational Studies* to publish in English, the first to include authors from China and Vietnam, and the first to be edited and to have the editor's introduction written by a British academic writing in English, something I feel greatly honoured to

have been asked to do by my fellow Polish editors. All these changes within just two years illustrate exactly why this issue on 'community' is essential. As with the world of education-practice and with the wider society, that we as education researchers explore in our writing, our own academic world is also rapidly changing. This will bring challenges and opportunities, debates and areas of contention. The ways to explore this and engage positively with these changes will be varied and this is reflected in this issue.

This response to this theme of 'community' within this issue of the *Polish Journal of Educational Studies* is exceptionally rich and varied. It is varied in terms of concepts, methods, and conclusions. Indeed firstly, what immediately appears as one reads this issue, is that included within it are an exceptionally wide variety of styles and approaches to the writing of the articles themselves. It includes think-pieces, and conceptual articles as well as more conventional empirical research. This is distinct in the field of academic journals in education, in which empirical studies tend to dominate. It is very positive to be able to acknowledge the contributions that can be made to the knowledge communities that we work within by these other types of writing. It is a rich-ness with this journal that writers are prepared to contribute work that explores their own boundaries and even the boundaries of what an academic article might be.

There is though a strong clutch of empirical studies presented here. As well as welcoming thought pieces and conceptual articles, these more conventional articles are vital for this journal to be able to continue to make strong claims for knowledge generation, 66 years after it was first created. Thought pieces can initiate and conceptual pieces can frame but only empirical research moves knowledge communities incrementally forward with confidence. Importantly though, within this group of empirical articles a wide variety of methods have been employed. This range indicates the blooming of different methodological approaches within Europe in the past few years and it is right that this journal should be open to and acknowledge this. Therefore, included in this issue, there are familiarly structured mid-sized triangulated studies. The ones included here make strong contributions to our understanding of the nature of communities; excellent examples being the article by Murphy et al., and the article by Teseznyi et al. Both of these explore perceptions of communities among university students. However, there are also examples of micro-studies, the smallest sample used by any researcher published here can be found in the article by Barrow and O'Shea. It involved just a single-participant yet is able to make confident claims for our further understanding of the nature of leadership by the depth of analysis that such an innovative approach enabled. In this issue the *Polish journal of Educational Studies* has been able to continue to make contributions to debates on research methods too.

Most importantly though and at the heart of how this issue can contribute to larger debates internationally is the range of ways in which the concept of community

has been explored, discussed and re-imagined. The article in this issue with the widest scope is the far-reaching historical and philosophical thought-piece by Nikitorowicz, which approaches fundamental concepts presented by migration patterns in the current era by placing these in the context of a long span of history reaching back several hundred years. Another approach is the article by Miço & Zaçellari in which they have explored 'community' within the boundaries of a single country (Albania) in the context of legal and practical changes in rights legislation in recent decades. Through a precise policy informed document analysis they have presented a discussion relevant to all nations. On another scale there are also tightly bounded articles which focus on a range of specific small or even micro communities but that through these lenses address larger debates. These include Młynarczuk-Sokołowska's explorations into children who have immigrated to Poland and Pui's study into the unique micro-community that is present in a class of children with special educational needs. This range gives depth and integrity to this issue and indeed in several of the articles presented here it is the voice of teachers and students that bring these debates to life.

Several articles have addressed community directly as a concept but others have explored the concept itself by breaking it down into fundamental aspects of what a community is. With my fellow writer Thanh Truong I have explored, *via* a literature driven conceptual study, the nature of knowledge within communities and how the sharing of knowledge is a fundamental driver in the creation and sustaining of communities. Teszenyi et al. have similarly explored this but within the more structured context of empirical research. Others have explored practical aspects of community building. This includes O'Shea's article on the role teachers have in facilitating a learning community through the dialogue of assessment. This is another methodologically innovative article which uses a narrow, practice-based focus to explore a range of significant issues in education, including the nature of classroom relationships.

A final theme that criss-crosses throughout this journal, is that many articles have focused on identity within community and the way individuals present and structure their own role. This is explicitly addressed by some but is implicitly present in the wider discussions in articles across this issue. This journal therefore involves both exploration and reflection. It includes academics looking outwards to the communities they write about and implicitly looking inwards to the academic community that they belong to. On this theme of the relationship between the community and the individual, interestingly and in keeping with the field of education, the majority of papers presented here have been co-written, with at least two writers writing together and in some cases quite large writing teams. The communities that these represent pleasingly reveal an academic culture that values community and relationships.

The journal we present here is a journal of its time. We present studies written in 2019 to be read in 2020. They are current, fresh, and engage with the debates of today.

I have referred to some articles in the text above. These are just examples. I encourage the reader to explore this issue fully. If it is read as a whole it is a positive but challenging collection of articles. As fits with this time, not one article is about communities in stasis. Every writer, without exception, addresses the process of change. However, many propose solutions and all conclude with the opening of debates and discussions. It is an issue for 2019 and 2020 but the debates, solutions, proposals and concepts presented by these authors will be generative for years to come.