Letter from the Editors

By Jill Heiney-Smith, Emily Huff, and Pete Renn

Seattle Pacific University (SPU) is honored to host the *Curriculum in Context* journal, beginning with this timely issue on equity and access. As a board member in my second year, I am keenly aware of the powerfully relevant resources and opportunities that a connection with WSASCD can provide.

On October 29, SPU welcomed attendees and WSASCD board members for a workshop on Depth of Knowledge with Dr. Norm Webb. Dr. Webb worked with participants to examine their own district artifacts and consider whether the tasks offered access to rigorous and complex learning. This content mirrors much of what you will read in this issue of *Curriculum in Context*, where we blend academic research with current district and state programs and offer a new imagination for equity work in your own context.

Popielarz & Monreal compel the reader to reimagine place-based pedagogies by linking teaching and learning practices to local communities. Bruner describes the fifteen-year effort in the Mt. Vernon school district to grow and refine its Leading for Equity initiative. Figet shares the stunning success of the Ocean Fest Youth Story Contest, designed to encourage the voices of all youth and specifically to welcome and include indigenous culture. Laurie Dils offers readers an opportunity to consider equity and access through the lens of comprehensive sexual health education, suggesting strategies to focus on student needs rather than the fears of adults. Link and Guskey and Koetje each offer timely and relevant contributions as well. Link and Guskey examine the connection between race, gender, and traditional grading and propose a new paradigm for criteria-based grading, while Koetje examines how districts can fill the equity gap through new research and practice on E-Mentoring during the induction of new teachers.

The editorial team at SPU was delighted to work with each of these authors through the draft-to-publication process. We hope you enjoy the issue.

**Dr. Jill Heiney-Smith** is managing editor and the director of graduate teacher education at SPU. A former English teacher, Jill has worked in teacher education for fifteen years at both UW and SPU. Jill’s research focuses on preservice mentor teacher development and equitable curriculum and programming for teacher candidates. Jill finds serving on the WSASCD board an invaluable resource in staying current and connected to K-12 education.

**Emily Huff** is co-editor and a member of the School of Education faculty at Seattle Pacific University; she also works as the director of field placements at SPU. Her teaching experience ranges from first grade through high school in Seattle and Tukwila, and she has supported teacher candidates at Vanderbilt University, University of Tennessee and SPU. She also serves as the director of an educational non-profit advocating for children in India and Kenya.

**Dr. Pete Renn** is co-editor and an assistant dean and faculty member in the School of Education at Seattle Pacific University. An educator for 28 years, Pete’s experience includes teaching at the middle school level and serving as a school principal. His research interests focus on the social foundations of education and the application of the principles of critical pedagogy in the classroom.