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A warm welcome to this Special Issue on Compassionate Pedagogy which I hope you will find interesting and thought provoking. JPAAP received an encouraging number of abstracts that led to papers from authors working in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and North America in an intellectually stimulating range of disciplines. These include education development/learning and teaching enhancement, teacher education, psychology, sociology, medicine and dentistry, nursing and English literature. This range reflects both the interdisciplinary nature of compassion, and its wide reach and international relevance in 21st century universities. There is also an inspiring blend of original research and case studies, thoughtful reflective analyses, on the horizon and opinion papers, and a review of Alexander Clark and Bailey Sousa's recent book *How to be a happy academic*. Seen as a whole, this Special Issue marks what might be called 'the compassion turn' in academic practice and pedagogy in the current complex and challenging higher education climate.

Two empirical research papers offer complementary, yet different perspectives on staff and student experiences of compassion and pedagogy. Valerie Bonnardel and colleagues surveyed UK psychology students' attitudes towards the introduction of contemplative pedagogy, and found their attitudes were encouragingly positive, but also tempered with feelings of self-consciousness. Martha Caddell and Kimberly Wilder's qualitative study provides rich narratives from UK academics, highlighting the need for compassion, kindness and generosity in the 'measured university'. Notably both papers raise concerns regarding the mental health of both staff and students in environments where pressure to perform and expectations are high.

The case studies in this issue yield rich and creative insights and examples of good practice, whilst also illuminating some of the 'darker sides' of university life, which I refer to in Waddington (2017). Jessica Hancock describes a new course for doctoral candidates, 'Establishing a Teaching Persona', at a UK university, which focuses on both compassion and identity to better prepare PhD students for teaching students. Eileen Pollard discusses storytelling in her account of developing the module 'Chester Retold' which brought together students from the University of Chester with members of the local community and addresses learning outcomes relating to compassion and emotional learning. Lisa Dickson and Tracy Summerville's North American case study uses the First Nations' creation story of sky woman Charm, as a model to create a programme for the promotion of compassionate pedagogy. However this story does not have a happy ending when 'sky woman [compassion] met the king of bureaucracy [university policies and systems]' and the programme closed.

Two other North American case studies offer new directions for the development of compassionate pedagogy. Juliette Trail and Tim Cunningham describe the University of Virginia's culture change process towards becoming a more contemplative and compassionate institution. Examples of changes implemented include resilience retreats, mentoring and mindfulness initiatives. Nevertheless, they also warn of the challenges they faced overcoming stereotypes and resistance to compassion as a 'soft skill'. Phoebe Godfrey and two of her undergraduate students Jessica Larkin-Wells and Julianne Frechette give an autoethnographic account of their experiences of a 'sustainable societies' sociology initiative, linked to student mental health and wellbeing. Importantly, they draw upon Kim Case's (2017) edited volume *Intersectional pedagogy: Complicating identity and social justice*, and advance the new concept of 'intersectional compassionate pedagogy'.

Tess Maginess and Alison MacKenzie's reflective analysis paper engages with the philosophical concept of *moralised* compassion. Echoing Phoebe Godfrey and her students, they argue that it is time for students, teachers and all involved in universities to become a humanising voice which listens and hears the realities of the marginalised and excluded. In the second reflective paper in this issue Wendy Lowe offers an honest and insightful reflective analysis of her experience of gaining negative and unkind feedback from medical students in the context of teaching social sciences in a medical school. She demonstrates how reflecting with compassion and 'sharing the shame' enabled re-interpretation of feedback. The emotional aspects of feedback are also addressed in Ellen Spaeth's opinion piece about the emotional labour involved in giving positive constructive feedback to students. The stress associated with heavy marking loads and tight turnaround times is acknowledged, and useful pointers for future research are given.

Geoff Taggart's on the horizon paper looks to the future, describing a mindful journaling activity which illustrates the importance of time and space for reflection as a crucial consideration in compassionate pedagogy. Elizabeth Adamson outlines a relational model for helping student nurses develop skills of 'compassionate craftsmanship' which has wider relevance and application for students in other helping professions. I argue in an opinion piece that there is now a compelling need for compassionate academic leadership in our universities in national and international contexts. This needs to be a shared approach, characterised by openness, curiosity, authenticity, appreciation and kindness at every level, role and discipline. The papers here provide strong support for this argument, and offer some hope for a more compassionate future.



Editorial

Some reflections, as I write this editorial in Moscow after presenting a compassion related paper and workshop at a Business Psychology conference, are: (i) time to think and critically reflect must be safeguarded at all costs if compassionate pedagogy is to flourish; (ii) there are important cross-cultural issues in the development of compassionate pedagogy that are worthy of further consideration - students in Russia, for example, found the concept of self-compassion, which I argue is the starting point for creating the conditions for compassion (Waddington, 2017) somewhat at odds with what they termed self-pity; and (iii) I have deliberately avoided abbreviating the concept of compassionate pedagogy to 'CP' for two reasons. Firstly to avoid confusion, as CP is more widely understood as the acronym for contemplative pedagogy; and secondly, because although abbreviations can be useful, arguably they represent a reductionist approach, and compassionate pedagogy, if it is to flourish, must challenge such dominant paradigms. Finally, I offer some guiding principles, drawn from Gibbs (2017, p. 232) to shape the future for compassionate pedagogy:

- Compassion is founded on the dignity and limitations of humanity;
- Compassion is universal;
- Compassion inevitably expresses itself in the fight for justice;
- Compassion is for the weakest, those whom society condemn as outcasts and whose dignity had been taken away.

The papers in this Special Issue provide much food for thought, *and action*. As Goleman (2015) notes, in the Dalia Lama's vision for the world compassion has little value if it remains at the level of an idea. It must motivate how we respond to others, and be evident in all of our thoughts and actions.

Kathryn Waddington
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