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From the Editor's desk

Associate Professor Trace Ollis

Vale Professor Chris Duke

The passing of Professor Chris Duke has left the adult learning discipline and community grieving. Chris was a respected figure in the adult education community and a leader in the field worldwide. He held esteemed positions as a professor at RMIT University and Glasgow Universities and was a husband, father, and talented gardener. While I will delve only a little into his scholarship and work in Australia and beyond, it is worth noting that he was an internationally recognised figure in education. This was evident through his long-standing involvement with ASPAE and PIMA, where he served as a bulletin editor for over 25 years. Those who want to know more about Chris's work and dedication to adult education should read the recent PIMA bulletin. This special edition details his work in Australiana and internationally, highlighting his remarkable commitment to adult and lifelong learning. It also shares stories about Chris, showcasing his unwavering devotion to family, colleagues, friends, and community. Unfortunately, we received news of Chris's passing during the June UALL conference at Cambridge University. At the conference dinner, Professor Annette Foley, a member of AJAL's editorial board and current Vice President of ALA, paid a fitting tribute to Chris, celebrating the impact of his work and dedication to adult and lifelong learning. On behalf of the journal,

we extend our sincere condolences to Chris's family, friends, and colleagues. Undoubtedly, his adult and lifelong learning work will be a lasting legacy.

The July 2023 issue of the journal contains papers from Australia, Sweden, China, the United States, and Turkey. It includes articles discussing contemporary issues related to adult learning, such as gender-specific learning spaces for men in Men's Sheds, the experiences of working-class mothers in choosing post-secondary schooling for their children, and adult education. In the higher adult learning space, a paper examines the experiences of Chinese PhD students and their supervisors.

The first paper for the edition discusses Men's sheds and is based on research conducted in Sweden, New Zealand, and Australia. Helene Ahl, Barry Golding, and Joel Hedegaard suggest that certain homogeneous adult learning groups may be necessary to promote diversity. Their paper, *"Why some homogeneous adult learning groups may be necessary for encouraging diversity: A theory of conditional social equality"*, challenges homogeneity in adult learning within the men's shed movement. The research draws on data from Denmark, Australia, and New Zealand to challenge normative and reductive accounts of inequality expressed in the theory of Conditional Social Equality. Men's sheds began in Australia as a space where men could meet, share knowledge and skills and learn informally. They have been widely documented to positively impact the participants' mental health, well-being, and relationships with their partners, as women also benefit from men's involvement in the sheds. The authors argue that there is a need for homosocial groups, as they provide an essential space that enables men to learn from and develop solidarity with other men. However, the authors also claim that while there is solidarity and understanding across class issues, the spaces do not always include differences and lack cultural and sexual diversity.

In the paper titled *"Post-school dilemmas in diminished society: Working-class mothers' perspectives of choices and realities in their communities"* by Piper Rodd, data from a study conducted in Australia is analysed to understand the views of working-class parents regarding the opportunities available to their children after completing school

in contemporary Australia. Rodd examines the concepts of "cruel optimism" and "diminished society" as well as the idea of a "collective community" that comes with success through education, aspiration, and achievement among young Australians. The author argues that neoliberal social and economic policies become normalised when financial circumstances dictate political and ideological realities. Using a broad critical theory approach, the paper critiques issues related to economic disadvantage and schooling and explores the impact of neoliberalism on the choices and options these families have when considering their children's higher education and work aspirations. The data presented in the paper indicates that working-class mothers possess valuable insights into the barriers they face in this regard. According to the paper's data, working-class mothers have a significant understanding of the challenges they encounter while preparing for their children's future career success. They also tend to favour vocational education opportunities such as apprenticeships or other vocational work pathways over higher education. The paper sheds light on working-class families' difficulties regarding schooling and raises important questions about inequality regarding post-secondary education options for children from these families.

Amidst the current concerns about Chinese students studying in Australia and the growing dependence of universities on income generated from international students, Jian Xu and Wai-wan Vivian Chan have written an article titled *"Doing and supervising China Studies PhD projects in Australia: Experiences of Chinese PhD students and Australian supervisors"*. The article provides insight into the experiences of Chinese PhD students conducting research in Australia and the perspectives of their Australian supervisors. The research is qualitative and based on semi-structured interviews. It interprets the challenges, expectations, and experiences of PhD supervisors and students studying for a PhD in Australia. The research findings reveal conflicting expectations between Chinese PhD students and their supervisors regarding completion timelines and academic standards. Due to their upbringing in a communist system that emphasises the ideology of historical materialism, Chinese students may hesitate to critique government policies related to their research, causing tension for students and supervisors. The study's qualitative data is presented through participants' and supervisors' narratives, providing Australian

universities with insight into Chinese PhD students' cultural and educational challenges. This knowledge can help universities offer better research training and attract more international students, including those from China.

Jen Ouellette-Schramm's paper, "*Self-authored motivations of US adult basic education English learners*" explores why many adult English learners enrolled in adult basic education programs. These programs are designed to improve their literacy and English language skills, increasing their chances of entering the workforce. However, the author argues that it needs to be clarified whether the federal government's program's goals align with the learners' goals. In this article, the author utilises "self-authorship" a theory of adult development from psychology to analyse a small group of three individuals learning English as a second language. The article explores the unique learning motivations of these individuals and provides suggestions for adult education programs to cater to the self-authored learning needs of future adult English learners.

The final article, "*Cultural participation patterns of prospective teachers in the context of informal learning*", by Peri Tutar, outlines the lifelong learning culture of teacher candidates in Turkey. The study employs Bourdieu's theory of Cultural Capital, defined as the sum of intellectual qualities. The research collected data through a cultural participation survey focused on future teachers' cultural participation patterns. This quantitative study used various statistical methods such as frequency, percentage, chi-square testing, t-testing, and one-way variance analysis (ANOVA). The findings indicate that the parent's education level and income status significantly influenced education levels, work status, and family income. However, the study found no significant difference based on the class they studied or their parents' working status.