

Foreword

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Welcome to this fortieth issue of *Research Matters*, marking 20 years of publication. A big number anniversary provides an opportunity to reflect on achievements and to speculate on what the future may hold. The foreword from issue 20 considered early *Research Matters* history. It is a real privilege to pick up 10 years later and take stock of the next decade of published research – and what a decade it has been!

At the forefront of everyone's minds when we think about current educational issues are themes around digital innovation, artificial intelligence (AI), accessibility and equity in a globalised society. Furthermore, thirst for change and thrust behind transformation are accelerated and amplified by large-scale disruptive events. There have been plenty of these – cross-national and civil conflicts, natural disasters and unprecedented world events. The COVID-19 pandemic revolutionised, for a short space of time, the way learners and teachers experienced schooling in almost every jurisdiction worldwide and unleashed what has previously been described as a vast natural experiment into delivering education differently. With one of the biggest natural disasters known to humanity looming in the form of climate change, we are thinking anew about greener educational policies, practices and products.

What does this have to do with *Research Matters* articles from the past 10 years? Three things. Firstly, futures experts value “horizon scanning”, seeking early signals of trends and change. Many of the themes we are now most concerned about have been flagged in *Research Matters*: a piece on text mining, a forerunner of AI; various articles on aspects of digital innovation and accessibility. Secondly, although no articles foresaw the pandemic, once it happened publications in *Research Matters* rapidly evaluated long-term outcomes, highlighted challenges and documented, in detail, the thoughts and reactions of school communities. This helped stakeholders to understand, process and deal with a myriad of issues. Thirdly, navigating any sort of changing educational landscape requires robust evidence, widely available to stakeholders. Organisations like Cambridge University Press & Assessment believe in the value of sharing knowledge and thinking for the wider benefit of society, and *Research Matters* plays a role in this. For school teachers and university lecturers understanding students' preparedness for higher education, ministry officials interested in curriculum, and colleagues from awarding and regulatory bodies seeking information about aspects of assessment delivery, *Research Matters* is a trusted source of reliable, robust, interesting, relevant information.

This responsibility is not taken lightly by the editorial team, who work to produce balanced issues with something of interest to everyone. Our contributors have wide-ranging specialisms and report clearly and concisely about methods, experiments, literature, issues and solutions. Sharing knowledge and ideas is fundamental to who we are and what we do, and we look forward to seeing what the next 20 issues will bring.