INCLUSIVENESS & LARGE SCALE STUDIES: AN EXPLOSIVE ISSUE
An Editorial

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Landmines are a particular nasty side of war. They care nothing about your political or economic stances, age, religion, culture, social status or skin colour. Their only target is proximity. If you happen to be in the area when one goes off, there is no discrimination. It is truly a killer with no reasoning ability: just blind mayhem. This is why the elimination of this equal opportunity assassin had been the top priority of many peacemakers in the world. Jody Williams, Hendrik Ehlers, and Princess Diana have all raised awareness of this menace. However, when it comes to eliminating the more than 110 million active landmines found in over 70 countries around the world, the work becomes a little trickier. Cheap to make and plant (as low as 3 dollars per), it can cost 50 times as much to remove these hidden bombs. The question then remains, what is the best way to proceed with their eradication?

Many nations put their faith in large scale landmine removal. Experts locate fields of mines (because there is rarely any map to point them out), and proceed to purposefully blow them up with large mechanical flails. This method can go at a good pace and is suitable for open territory. However, results do vary from 99.6% (according to the UN) to as low as 50% (according to the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining). In other words, “cleared” fields may frequently leave unexploded mines behind, and there are many back alleys, small walkways and paths where flailers just cannot be of any use. For this individualized issue, manual removal or the use of high heat combustion with diethylene triamine (without detonation) are the preferred methods to avoid the spread of shrapnel in a populated area.

The point of this example is to show that those who specialize in landmine removal keep the end goal of elimination in mind. They do not get bogged down by clinging to one method as the best and only one to use. Instead, they see them as mere tools, some better for one job, some better for another. They may make great strides in an open field, yet leave a dozen mines behind. They then feel no sense of disloyalty to turn to another
method to finish the job and make the field completely safe for re-habitation. Neither would a true expert cling to a manual method that would take ten times as long to complete simply because they were wed to an individualized technique. Rather, this field of expertise embraces all available methods, and purposefully varies them based on what is being accomplished.

The authors of this issue of CJAR endeavour to make the same point through their work in education. They have realized that while large scale research and standardized testing may do an excellent job of getting the big picture, coming up with valid generalizations and making nation-wide recommendations, they do not have much to add but misinformation when dealing with the narrow corridors of individual schools. This is certainly the case when examining the issue of inclusiveness in the classroom. Our first author **Cam Cobb**, examines the introduction of a music accommodation for Muslim students during Ramadan in a single case study, and examines why large scale policy had proven to be ineffective. This theme is taken up by our second author, **Wanda Lyons**, who uses participatory action research methods to deal with inclusivity in individual classrooms. In looking at the serious problems of student disassociation south of the border, **David Coddens** and **Michael Shriner** hold a school under the microscope to examine interactions between students of various races, and come up with conclusions centering on the importance of location. Finally, **Marla Smithson** uses a quantitative approach to see how students in her class can meet a targeted, individualized goal.

In the end, therefore, educational research can learn a lot from the field of demining, I feel. Like any problem, whether it be disposing the world of a great evil, or endeavouring to uncover pedagogical solutions, answers should not be side-lined by adherence to one method or the degradation of another. We should be more pragmatic than that. And like the world of landmine clearing, I do not believe we have the luxury to ignore the many open fields, tight paths and techniques that should be open to us.