

Editorial Introduction

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With this new issue of the journal, the scholarly project of analyzing educational contexts and relationships through the prism of social well-being and the rights of people to lead decent lives continues. Here, the issue is not always about the total absence of education, or even any apparent weaknesses of the delivery of learning possibilities to both young and adult learners. Many times, as we have relayed in the pages of this publication more than once, the center of the story should be the effectiveness of educational platforms and relations that can actively respond to the learning needs of different populations around the world. Indeed, around the world, for although the needs of the local and the global are not necessarily the same, they are not necessarily detached from one another. Today, we surely live in a world that is continually globalizing where social, economic, political and cultural connections are mediated by the educational and at a related level, by the technological. As such, learning contexts located in diverse settings are not necessarily delinked from one another, and the idea of policy, programmatic or methodological borrowings are more common than ever. But so are also the learning needs expected by different populations which, even when they have to be geographically detached, shouldn't be necessarily disconnected in their qualitative constructions and dispensations.

It is with that central understanding that we continuously maintain and emphasize our foci on the relevance of educational situations that must be responsive to the needs of the individual, the community and society at large. The point on responsiveness is especially important in that learning programs can either enfranchise people 's rights and needs, or, as has happened in many parts of the world, would be antithetical to those expectations, and establish clustered notations and practices of organized disenfranchisements that lower both the educational and socio-economic harvests. It is with this understanding that the elemental space of the pedagogical becomes crucial. Indeed, the quality of knowledge transfer becomes the point of conjecture in educational development, which also justifies a sustained focus on ascertaining the location of teachers and teachers' responses to the dispensational locations and structures of education. Many times, it is only the structural quality of teacher training or teachers' epistemic preparedness that is seen to determine the learning outcomes of many schooling contexts where the conventional wisdom is to aim for educational equality. Educational equality, of course, sounds great, but as many of us have been saying in the past decade or so, it is anything but sufficient to explain or actively respond to the practical needs of those whose learning

possibilities have been jeopardized by historical, cultural or psycho-physiological realities that are habitualized on the normative conventions and intersections of life.

It is with this in mind that educational equality, which basically talks about the equalizations of the measurable categories of education, must voluntarily cede space to the urgent need for the thick equities that are expansively needed in all relationships of learning where the basic rights of learners to receive effectively endowing education should be established. In talking about educational equity, therefore, we have to be comprehensive and be both horizontally and vertically oriented. That is, we cannot minimize the importance of anything that defines or is defined by the lives of learners, certainly all learners, who should not become auxiliaries to the conventional processes of education and the selectively usable outcomes of such education. Undoubtedly for educational researchers such as myself, an equitably enfranchising education does not deploy fashionable percentages to show who succeeded or failed in the learning dispensations of the day, it deliberately uses the other, more nuanced, non-rationalist language of life where the story is about the best possible ways to make sure that every learner who is, in the first place, socio-‘legally’ admitted into the schooling institutionalization, succeeds and historico-culturally and life wise, de-institutionalizes himself or herself for a more open-ended and more promising tomorrow. This possible educational equity can be understood and analyzed at both local and global levels and in relation to the dominant systems of learning marginalizations; indeed, a viable educational equity can and should give us a learner-teacher togetherness prospect. The three articles in this issue directly address issues that are relevant for such analysis, and it should be with such wider understanding of the situation that we can achieve the best possible education in both the local and global locations.

In the first article, *Teachers’ Enactment of Equity in Alternative Schools: A critical discourse analysis*, Lynn Hemmer discusses how understanding the needs of at-risk students is thought to be an essential element for educators when they formulate and design alternative educational settings. Yet, it may be difficult for educators to distinguish between responding to the needs of an at-risk student and providing educational equity. In analyzing the issues, she applied equity principles and policy implementation literature to explore how alternative school teachers of at-risk students define, interpret and enact equity. The research was designed as a qualitative cross-case study focusing on five alternative schools in California and Texas. A qualitative thematic analysis was first applied to interviews from fifteen alternative school teachers, followed by a critical discourse analysis of government artifacts, and discursive and social practices. Among Hemmer’s findings is that enactment of equity equated to opportunity; and how at-risk students were afforded equity by virtue of enrollment in the schools. Implicitly, she notes, teachers acted as gate keepers to their classroom and as such only certain students were entitled to attend. In addition, Equity arguments emerged when external forces were perceived as creating inequities. Implicit equity arguments emerged by how teachers defined success. She also notes how innovative design and practices used in alternative schools are insufficient for ensuring equity.

Enactment of equity through pedagogical choices is reduced by policy procedures. In terms of the need for more work in this domain, Hemmer points to some research areas: a) that will help teachers reflect on their values and priorities for at-risk students and b) of how efficacy is measured for the alternative school.

In the second article, *What Should Preservice Teachers Know about Race and Diversity? Exploring a critical knowledge-base for teaching in 21st century Canadian classrooms*, Benedicta Egbo says that anecdotal and empirical evidence suggest that how teachers construct and interpret issues of race and diversity impacts significantly on their interactions with students from diverse backgrounds. At the same time, research shows that teacher education programs do not pay as much attention as would logically be expected given that many Canadian teachers will spend a good part of their career in racially and culturally heterogeneous settings. Conceptually grounded in critical race theory- a framework with increasing application in education, Egbo explores in this paper the knowledge-base that preservice teachers require for successful teaching in a pluralistic society. A central argument in the paper is that a deep understanding of, and knowledge about race and diversity (beyond cursory familiarity) should be one of the required outcomes of preservice education. In the third article, *Back to the cave: cold, hungry and cruel? An epithet for the World Bank's neoliberal economy project*, Maria Veronica G. Caparas shows that the World Bank, along with other international financial institutions, is the primary architect of neoliberal policy of privatizing the formation of higher education and the migration of skilled labour from the Global South to the Global North. The Bank, through development gurus and theories orchestrating the pro-North development agenda, systematically manoeuvres the neoliberalization of higher education and migrant labour from the 1980s to the late 2000s with the promise of democracy, equity, justice and prosperity. Despite massive doses of The Bank-prescribed neoliberal development pills, the majority of the world's population has yet to experience the promise. The Global South, through three selected countries that see the wisdom of wielding strong state roles in delivering social services, is able to partly parry the deadly sting of the 2008 global economic downturn. The South, immersed as it is in the North's development agenda as shown in selected literature, has become, notes Caparas, a doppelganger of the North. In determining the South's dynamic in service delivery, she turns to Habermas' communicative rationality that likewise brings to bear similarly framed thoughts as the yardstick of the South's critical voice against the North's continuing espousal of neoliberal policy. It is this critical voice that further cultivates people's micropolitics of beliefs, gender and language, and cries out "no" to The Bank-prescribed neoliberalized higher education and migrant labour – a prescription that leads to and simulates a "back-to-the-cave" circumstance. Besides the three articles, there are also two book reviews in this issue, *The new African Diaspora* (2009) by I. Okpewho and N. Nzegwu (Eds.), reviewed by Thashika Pillay; and *Governing Educational Desire: Culture, Politics, and Schooling in China* (2011) by A.B. Kipnis, reviewed by Lorin Yochim.

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