

## Editorial

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Institutional and community engagement with global, national and local education systems influence how educational stakeholders take up reform. Systemic jurisdiction over education has the power to impact outcomes, whether that be a school's relationship with parents or a school council, or a national agenda on university reform. Theories of globalisation, internationalisation, cosmopolitanism, and social capital provide innovative frameworks for analysing institutional engagement in education. Not surprisingly, institutional processes, curriculum change, decentralization, student engagement, and language are just some of the many factors that have taken new forms through the international circulation of ideas and systemic change.

The five articles included in this issue of *IEJ: Comparative Perspectives* explore the engagement of educational institutions with change. The authors of these articles use a range of theoretical perspectives to describe and explain how change has occurred in individual school communities, in networks of universities, and in the cosmopolitan knowledge nurtured through the institution of international schools. Many of these articles explore how students and teachers experience education systems and what impact this has on work and worldviews. Perspectives are included from Hong Kong, Canada, Guatemala, Greece, the United States and international schools.

This issue begins with Hayden's exploration of international schools and cosmopolitanism. Hayden briefly introduces the philosophical roots of cosmopolitanism and explores how the mission statements of international schools use the notion of cosmopolitanism to define their purposes and places as international institutions. To do this, Hayden performed a content analysis of the mission statements of sixty-seven international schools. Hayden suggests that international schools have well-situated potential to incorporate cosmopolitan ideals into curricula, but incorporating these ideals into practice may be difficult. As Hayden persuasively argues, "The only truly incompatible aspects of cosmopolitan education with traditional civic education are those characteristics that promote the local or national interests *to the exclusion* of non-national, international, and/or global interests."

Hayes & Hudson explore how teachers at a public elementary school in Guatemala view the future of education and how these concerns are, in fact, mirrored in a global context. In fact, schools are not isolated institutions, and the authors argue that privatization as driven by the process of neoliberal globalisation challenges teacher autonomy and agency. The teachers interviewed by the authors suggested that the government's educational privatization program was not aligned with everyday realities of a school in a small rural community. The authors use a critical ethnographic approach in their methodology and frame an analysis through the theoretical

intersection of neoliberalism, the capability approach and education. In their analysis, Hayes & Hudson found that local issues are increasingly becoming influenced by global ideas; and, specific to the context of their study, teachers are participating in social action agendas.

Preston also uses a qualitative approach in examining the challenges faced by a school council in supporting a school improvement plan. Preston's primary data comes from interviews with stakeholders at a rural school in Saskatchewan, Canada. Preston examines a recent School Community Council policy, and how perceptions of community involvement influence the Council's facilitation of a *Learning Improvement Plan* for the school. She finds a misalignment in how the School Community Council policy describes parents' and community members' roles and how parents and community members ideally perceive their roles on the Council. She argues that her research reveals that parent and community members should be viewed as supporters of community involvement and that this is a crucial ideal in terms of increasing social cohesion of the school community. Both Preston's and Hayes & Hudson's articles highlight how qualitative studies focused on individual educational contexts can shed light on how communities respond and adapt to change and reform instigated at a national level; and, in the case of Hayes & Hudson, link to global discourses on neoliberal management.

Kitsantas, Kitsantas & Kitsantas recognize the trend of many national reports that demand a workforce that possesses strong skills in mathematics and science. Kitsantas et al. conducted an exploratory study using classification and regression trees (CART) to analyse survey data measuring students' interest in math and computer science. This was a cross-national comparative study conducted with students enrolled in two universities in the United States and Greece. Kitsantas et al. found that predictors of interest in mathematics and/or computer science contrasted between Greek and United States students. For example, parental expectations influenced the interest of students enrolled at a Greek university, while ability to cope with barriers influenced the interest of U.S. students in these subjects. The findings from their study carry implications for students less interested in mathematics and/or computer science. These include professional development programs for math and/or computer science instructors, early educational interventions targeting parents, access to role models or mentors, and a consideration of cultural differences in beliefs about math or science. As with the other articles included in this issue, the authors consider how national agendas impact student engagement in a particular educational setting.

Skidmore contributes a critical assessment of the University Grants Committee's (UGC) recommendations for internationalising higher education in Hong Kong. The report he analyses, entitled *Aspirations for the higher education system in Hong Kong*, was issued in December 2010. While Skidmore finds the recommendations timely, he suggests that the internationalisation approach recommended by the UGC is relatively top-down, which in turn threatens diversity and innovation at an individual institutional level. Skidmore frames his analysis by examining five major emphases in the report:

the rationale of the recommendations, the process for institutional arrangements vis a vis internationalisation, international student recruitment and study abroad, languages and curriculum. He finds that attention to practical measures encouraging student exchange are de-emphasised in the broader context of creating an 'educational hub' in Hong Kong. He also finds that an overreliance on English as medium of instruction and the absence of specific mechanisms for initiating international perspectives across the curriculum are overwhelmingly unacknowledged. In the end, while inclusion of internationalisation in Hong Kong's national higher education agenda is important, Skidmore suggests that not practically considering a bottom-up approach is a missed opportunity.

Each article in this issues presents important contributions to considering how institutions and stakeholders involved with those institutions negotiate local, national and international perspectives of education. The authors present innovative theoretical frameworks in analysing their research and its implications for policy and practice. The authors also utilise a range of qualitative and quantitative study designs that emphasise the range of methodologies that inform the field of international and comparative education.

Elizabeth Cassity

Laura Perry