

Introduction to the 5th Anniversary Issue of The International Journal of Multicultural Education

Anniversary Issue Editors

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With the publication of this issue, IJME marks a milestone: its fifth birthday. Founded by Heewon Chang to succeed an early online open-access journal (*Electronic Magazine of Multicultural Education*), IJME is unique among other journals in the field of education. This journal is dedicated to helping achieve educational equity and justice for all students in global contexts by broadly addressing issues of cultural and linguistic diversity that affect education, schooling, and responsive pedagogy. In addressing these issues of global multiculturalism and multicultural education, IJME is also unique because of its accessibility and reach.

As an online open-access journal, you as readers do not need to have a personal or institutional subscription to the journal to access to the ideas of IJME-published authors. If you search for “multicultural education” in the World Wide Web, IJME will appear quickly. You can use any article in the current and back issues as a resource for your own thinking, writing, teaching, and researching. Please read more about Heewon’s reason for founding an open-access journal and the journal’s sponsorship by visiting IJME’s companion [blog](#) site.

In terms of reach, the count of registered users of IJME now numbers over 2,800 people. Although the journal is open to anyone, users are encouraged to register for additional privileges such as the ability to submit manuscripts as authors, to review submissions, and to receive publication notices. In 2012 alone, IJME received almost 23,000 visits from registered and non-registered users from over 140 countries. These numbers tell us that IJME is being put to the purpose for which the journal was intended—the education of the broader public around multiculturalism and multicultural education. The numbers also reveal that IJME is being used by the international audience. We are pleased that readers have taken advantage of the journal’s open-access feature to learn more about policies and practices, in their corner of the world and beyond, that reflect and impact education-related thinking about culture, language, identity, diversity, schooling, equity, and social justice.

It is fitting that two of the articles included in this Anniversary Issue represent voices from the global community; we learn about multicultural education policy in Finland and about community-based resistance in Nepal and Vietnam. Not surprisingly, while the contexts these voices speak to are particular in their multicultural manifestations, the themes they voice are not: Sameness/Difference, Norm/Other, Majority/Minority. These themes of knowledge, identity, and power undergird work on multicultural teaching and learning that, going further, really targets questions of multicultural living. In this way, multicultural education has always been highly pragmatic—a tool not only to help us live in changing schooling and social contexts but also to enrich those contexts with appreciation of diversity, awareness of diversity as social, educational, economical, and political disparity, and aspiration toward change-making for a more just world. The articles collected here for this Anniversary Issue all share this pragmatism; each uses ideas of multicultural education as tools to confront and intervene in unjust social and schooling contexts. How they do this varies, reflecting their own epistemological and methodological backgrounds and dispositions; perhaps it goes without saying that even in work about diversity, we have diversity!

Where these articles and authors do this confrontation and intervention work also varies. By design, this Issue features multicultural education work taking place at a number of points of departure; some of the work these articles illustrate departs from the *policy* platforms of Finland and Montana, U. S. A. For example, Dervin, Paatela-Nieminen, Juoppala, and Riitaoja in “Multicultural Education in Finland: Renewed Intercultural Competencies to the Rescue?” describe Finland’s national multicultural education policy and suggest intercultural competencies as an alternative to that country’s focus on cross-cultural competence, which they critique for being essentializing and reductionist in its understanding of identity. They offer an arts-based approach to preservice multicultural teacher education that complicates identity by emphasizing its intertextual and intersubjective nature. Working with a more bounded understanding of identity, Carjuzaa, in “The Positive Impact of Culturally-Responsive Pedagogy,” explains Montana State’s Indian Education for All policy and its resultant professional development and evaluation efforts as being the largest single-group-study approach to multicultural education undertaken in the United States. Drawing largely on interviews with participating inservice teachers, she argues for the positive influence of this statewide culturally-responsive professional development initiative on teacher and student learning about the historical and contemporary American Indian experience that characterizes the state of Montana in the US context.

Other work in this Issue takes off from university *teacher education* platforms. In “Enhancing Cross-Cultural Learning in Teacher Education: The Global Classroom,” Seeberg and Minick present their study of multicultural teacher education as an approach facilitated by the global classroom made available through technological interface. They illustrate the value of students’ technology-mediated project-based work with cultural Others by discussing the different kinds of cross-cultural competencies that their students acquired through the process. In their article, “Bringing Theory to Life: Strategies that Make Culturally-Responsive Pedagogy a Reality in Diverse Secondary Classrooms,” Herrera, Holmes, and Kavimandan extend the interest beyond cultural-competence acquisition to language acquisition. These authors detail the practice of

biography-driven instruction and document how teachers, when educated about its implementation, can better meet not just the language but the academic and social needs of English Language Learners.

The work of one article here takes off from a *high school classroom* platform. Marsh and Desai, in “‘God Gave Us Two Ears and One Mouth for a Reason’: Building on Cultural Wealth Through a Call-and-Response Pedagogy,” write about how they came to conceptualize their work with low-income students of color in a Los Angeles school as taking a call-and-response pedagogy approach. Committed to infusing ideas of critical consciousness, voice, and cultural wealth into a stripped-down, standards-based high school curriculum, and understanding the role that the arts played in their own negotiations with marginalization, Marsh and Desai describe the dialogue that students engage in as they process how racial difference is reproduced at their school and come to poetic voice about the need for change.

The community experience with multicultural education policy and practice is another point of departure considered in this Issue. Departing from the *community engagement* platforms of Nepal and Vietnam, Davis, Phyak, and Bui, in “Multicultural Education as Community Engagement: Policies and Planning in a Transnational Era,” take up a dynamic understanding of culture, reflective of the lived reality of globalization and transnationalism in countries, like these, with long histories of colonization by the West. They illustrate the role played by local teachers working within their communities to resist neocolonial educational policies and practices that serve to further marginalize local cultures and languages.

And then there is the *conceptual* platform of multicultural education itself that Demerath and Mattheis use as the point of departure for their article, “Toward Common Ground: The Uses of Educational Anthropology in Multicultural Education,” the final one of this Issue. It can be understood as reaching back around to the concerns Dervin et al.’s article raises at the beginning of the Issue and expanding the platform of critique around how key constructs in the field, such as “culture” (and the often conflated concept of “race”) as well as “identity” and “difference” are often used in miseducative ways. Like Dervin et al., these authors prefer to work with more complex understandings of subjectivity that take into account how the intersecting contexts of students’ lives interact with their social identities in a constantly-evolving process. Mattheis and Demerath discuss the lens that educational anthropology brings to these complexities and offer ideas for multicultural educational practice that are informed, and transformed, by these insights.

Taken together, the collection of articles in this Anniversary Issue represents a knowledge collage of multicultural education theory and practice in the past, present, and “future.” There are points of convergence and divergence, of overlap and disjuncture, but these, indeed, reflect the variety of approaches that scholars in this interdisciplinary field bring to the shared goals of naming injustice in schools and society and claiming the work of change therein, whatever they conceive that to be, as their own. In an Anniversary Issue-accompanying Metalogue to appear on the IJME blog site (<http://ijme-journal.blogspot.com>), some IJME editors reflect with us on the images that appear in this knowledge collage, on the themes that emerge from this particular

juxtapositioning of articles. Together, to use Mattheis and Demerath's title, we explore what they reveal about the "common ground" (or not) on which the field, and we, as its caretakers, now stand. Among others, we will be guided in our "common ground" conversation by the following essential questions:

- How do we reconcile approaches to understanding diversity that emphasize individual identity with those that accentuate identity as/in relationship to group membership? Accordingly, what is multicultural education's common ground with respect to agency, social structure, and the dynamics of power?
- How do we recognize our discursive role in conversations about schooling? To what extent do the understandings we produce and the experiences we promote in the name of diversity and multicultural education continue to reproduce oppressive ideologies and material realities or, in fact, truly help us achieve the goal of transformative confrontation, intervention, and reconstruction? If we were to map the attained and still-desired effects of the field, where would we see the borders and the ways-through in our ideological common ground?
- What constitutes the breadth and depth of our field's knowledge base? What personal, professional, and scholarly backgrounds, experiences, interests, and activities do we who name and claim multicultural education have in common?
- What personal, professional, and scholarly backgrounds, experiences, interests, and activities do we name and claim as important for the next generation? What is our common sense about multicultural education content and pedagogy?
- In what spaces does multicultural education's change occur? Why, by way of, and through what people, processes, and practices? About the uncommon task of educating for social change that defines our field, do we, as its scholars, practitioners, and caretakers, have an answer-in-common to the question: "How will we know it when we see it?"

Join your voice with ours and those of other IJME editors at the IJME blog site to dialogue about these and other essential multicultural education questions. Together we can celebrate the fifth anniversary of the journal by using the articles included in this Anniversary Issue and the collage of knowledge they offer to collectively reflect on the past, present, and future of the field. On behalf of the entire IJME editorial team, we welcome your voice, thank you for your readership, and celebrate *your* stewardship in the (un)common work we do of bettering this world as we build another.