Editorial Introduction

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With the *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education* (JCIE) beginning its fourth year of publication, I must say I am very satisfied with the critical interventions our contributors have made in this and in the preceding issues of the journal. As I have mentioned at least two times in these editorial pages, education, as an expansive area of studies and research that should both theoretically and practically be inclusive, still needs few points of observational and analytical remodelling. As such, the opening up of more spaces to occasionally re-arrange the structure of the educational paradigm is essential. And as one of the most generalist publications in the educational literature, JCIE intends to minimally add, select and descriptively locate viabilities to the possible parameteric expansions of educational research and development. As such, we should not shy away from questioning and countrapuntally critiquing any epistemic sentries that might be deployed at the gate of the knowledge plains and hinterlands. Indeed, one of the main weaknesses in educational spaces may be related to the ongoing weakness in expanding the general representativeness of educational research. While the research focus may be on all areas of our world, where this research comes from, needs to be continually questioned.

Analyzing the above point from an historical angle, it is not difficult to understand the processes of deliberate epistemic exclusions and inclusions which have been expanding, and have undoubtedly, led to the ongoing validations and de-validations of select knowledge systems that could have been very useful (or useless) for the lives of people. As such, even other outlets for the proliferation of different learning ideas that might have made the same claims this journal is making, might not have effectively succeeded in creating new spaces of learning and pedagogical intersections that could have achieved some form of viable epistemological and ontological equities. If that was not the case, then we would not have experienced the heavy absence of so much that represents the lives as well as the experiences of people from many parts of the world. With that in mind, questions on ways of learning and practicing the outcomes of learning systems that can respond to the overall exigencies of different educational experiences and categories of knowing will be important. With the journal published from a university in the West, therefore, it is always useful to have the knowledge and learning contributions of scholars from both the North and South.

The use of these geographical notations could be problematic for some, so it should be useful to state here that in the Canadian context at least, the North/South categorizations intend to depict the space between 'developed' and 'developing' countries. Once again, there could be some contentions of who is developed and who is not developed, and how do you actually measure that. This is an issue that I myself have

tried to analyze more than once, and it should not preoccupy our intentions in this short editorial writing, but it should at least be raised so people are aware that it has been discussed and should continue to be critically analyzed in the future. It is in the spirit of this questioning and re-questioning of general knowledge systems, knowledge creation and their validations or absence that the three articles included in this issue analyze the crucial space between people's lived experiences, educational settings, and specific contexts of analyzing divergent methodologies so as to ascertain and use pedagogical platforms that might have specific social intentions which could be specific to some spaces of our world. By doing so, the three articles should enrich our understanding of what I would like to call the complexity of world learning systems and the unique realities that should be specific to each of these systems and attached instructional relationships.

It also noteworthy to note that it is the uniqueness (in terms of time and space) of each research contribution that could shape or at least influence the way people relate to their world, effectively analyze their surroundings and seek pertinent solutions for the daily issues that inform their lives. As such, whether the issue is lack of appreciating diverse school populations and the adverse effects that would have on a select group of learners, or it is about the need to understand learning trajectories that take place in select historical settings, or yet again, timely analysis of how to read and re read select textual representations and, in the process, what contextual demands we need to adhere to, our interactions with knowledge constructs and conceptualizations should always be ready to appreciate the perspectives that will be accorded via these and other pages of scholarly dispensations. In addition, with the free and open availability of the contents of the journal, an idea that was one of the main things that triggered the establishment of the publication, any contributions that we make to the international exchange of perspectives and analysis should enlarge the boundaries of both the established and emerging paradigmatic shifts that should characterize the continua of learning and living. Minimally, that will also enlarge the spaces of inclusion that will be harvested by all learners, which should be *wax aad u fiican* (something that is very good) for all of us.

With this mainly 'philosophical' introduction (that is, in terms of what the journal strives to achieve via this issue and through all its past and future issues), let me do some justice and introduce the articles. In the first article entitled, 'Multiple Literacies and Success for All: An Analysis of Ontario Educators,' Marie Josée Berger, George Dei and Renée Forgette-Giroux examine and analyze the survey findings of a study examining the teaching and evaluation strategies used by teachers in the classroom. The study focuses on 304 French and English schools in Ontario representing both urban and rural Ontario school boards. The essay begins with a review of the literature and highlights key points noted by educational theorists and practitioners regarding the importance and challenges of literacy education. The authors then move to discuss their discursive framework with regards to employing cognitive and social constructivism as theoretical lenses. Survey responses are presented under the broader categories of teaching and pedagogical practice and evaluation of teaching strategies. In analyzing the survey results, the authors highlight the following as being effective in the promotion of critical literacy: a teacher's own knowledge; pedagogical skills and approaches; the level of school and off-school/local

knowledge of students; the affirmation of the identity, culture and history of learners, as well as one's knowledge of the local community.

In the second article entitled, 'Education for Street Children in Egypt: The Role of Hope Village Society', Muhammad M. Zain Al-Dien evaluates the role of Hope Village Society (HVS) in Egypt in the provision of education to street children in order to establish its strengths and weaknesses, so that serves as a lesson for other providers of education to street children. Data for this study were collected using interview schedule and document analysis. Interviews were prepared for eight of the management staff of HVS. The findings of the study reveal that HVS plays a major role in providing education for street children in Egypt. Since the establishment of HVS's education programs in1995, it has recorded fluctuating enrolment rates. The participation of GOs, NGOs and community at HVS' education programs is less than what was expected. Like any other educational enterprise, HVS's education programs are faced with quite a number of problems. The study recommends that the Egyptian government should offer more financial contributions to organizations that provide education to street children. There is also an immediate need, the author notes, to engage other possible partners of HVS's education programs. Moreover, the study suggest, more research should be carried out in the area of pedagogy of street children.

In the third article entitled, 'Is Hyper-textual Learning a Challenge for Traditional Religious Education?', Seyed Mahdi Sajjadi examines how one of the outcomes of the expansion and growth of information technology is the predominance of hyper-textual learning space and consequently the weakening of the role and place of texts in learning and education process, especially in traditional religious education. As discussed here, substituting hyper-textual learning space for texts-based learning can bring about some outcomes for text-based religious education process. The article, therefore, focuses on challenges and problems created by hyper-textual learning space for the traditional religious education process. Taken together, the three articles should give us new perspectives that should expand, as was descriptively desired above, our understanding of educational and specialized pedagogical relationships, which should eventually enrich the lives of people wherever their locales may be located. Besides the articles, we also have a review of F.W. English's book, *The art of educational leadership: balancing performance and accountability* (2008), by Paul Newton.

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