EDITORIAL COMMENTS

In our last edition of International Education, I introduced myself as the new editor, and drew attention to our significantly expanded editorial board, and the level of expertise our diverse board brings to the journal. This current issue reflects this change, as our board has raised our standards for acceptance significantly. Where before the journal had around a 50% acceptance rate, it has dropped to 30% for this issue. All essays accepted in this issue have gone through revisions based on the feedback they received from their reviewers. This decrease in rate of acceptance is very good news for accepted authors as it underscores the quality of their work, and we hope the lower publication rate will encourage more talented authors to submit manuscripts. However, for this issue, it placed us in a position of being behind in going to press. We apologize for the delay in our spring issue, but hope you will appreciate the quality of the work you find within the covers. We continue to hope that by inviting more top scholars in diverse fields of education to the board, we will attract more submissions from diverse fields of study in education at an international level. Please help us spread the word, and thank you for your patience.

This issue considers important educational research topics in a way that draws our attention to schools' connections to the larger cultural context of diverse societies. The lead essay is by Cheryl Desmond, Professor of Educational Foundations, at Millersville University, Millersville, PA, USA. Entitled "EDUCO Schools in El Salvador: A Democratic Tree in a Globalized Forest?" this research on the Educacion con Participacion de Communidad (EDUCO) rural schools in El Salvador examines the nature of the reform and its impact on parent involvement and engagement for the local community. Desmond looks at the underlying economic and political ideologies of EDUCO, and interprets these findings to uncover the implications of the reform for democratic participation for the local school and community, as well as for the more broadly constructed meaning of democracy, nationally and internationally. We learn Desmond's findings are mixed for she concludes from her work that EDUCO reforms create and sustain local democratic participation in schools through increased parental engagement and local decision-making. However, they have also contributed to a reduction of democracy in the larger arena for democratic participation

at the national and global levels.

Our second essay, by Kristan Morrison, at Radford University, Radford, VA, USA, takes us to Thailand and the Ministry of Education's "Lighthouse Project." Morrison explains to us Thailand's establishment of two distinct educational tracks – a conventional track and an unconventional track – and concerns herself with the case of one of the programs – the Darunsikkhalai School for Innovative Learning (DSIL), through a qualitative case study. Morrison offers us a detailed description of the school and what it has accomplished as well as the challenges it faces in attempting to bring about new definitions of learning and teaching in Thailand.

Osamah Bataineh, Counseling and Educational Psychology, and Khaled Alazzi, Curriculum and Instruction, both at Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan, have us consider Jordanian secondary teachers perceptions toward critical thinking in their essay titled, "Perceptions of Jordanian Secondary Schools Teachers Towards Critical Thinking." Baraineh and Alazzi learn through interviews with secondary school social studies teachers that they are not familiar with the definition and teaching strategies of critical thinking. The Ministry of Education does not require teachers to teach critical thinking and does not provide teachers' manuals for the state-required textbooks that offer more than a minor reference to teaching critical thinking. Consequently, this research supports previous research that students in Jordan do not acquire critical thinking skills from their public school education.

Our final research essay shifts our focus to higher education and experiences of non-native English speaking international students. In "Language and Academic Identity: A Study of the Experiences of Non-native English Speaking International Students," by Olivia Halic, Katharine Greenberg, and Trena Paulus, all at the University of Tennessee, the authors present a phenomenological study based on interviews of eight participants. The student's experiences regarding language, culture, and identity are reported, organized into four themes: Mastering the language: You know you sound wrong; The meaning of language proficiency: English is alive; Language and academic identity: I feel I'm in-between, and Joining a new community of practice: You have to start all over again.

Concluding this issue are two book reviews, one by Hongmei Peng, University of Tennessee, on my own *Beyond Liberal Democracy*

in Schools: The Power of Pluralism. The second book review is by Zhihua Zhang, Simon Frazer University, on Johnanna Waters' *Education, Migration, and Cultural Capital in the Chinese Diaspora: Transnational Students Between Hong Kong and Canada*. We hope you will enjoy having your attention drawn to these books. Our Guidelines for Submissions can be found on the final page. I invite your contributions to this journal and look forward to hearing from you.

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