Editorial

Equity-Oriented Learning and Teaching

Dr Wei Liao as the Editor of this special issue on Equity-Oriented Teacher Education squarely addresses the question of preparing classroom teachers for the problem of a growing diversity of student learning needs. Wei argues that 'teachers' lack of preparation in diversity, inclusiveness, and equity' marginalizes disadvantaged students, widens achievement gaps among different groups, and perpetuates structural inequities. Teacher education properly attuned has the potential to address these equity issues through appropriate equity-related pedagogies and inclusive strategies such as culturally responsive forms of teaching. The massification of education and increased student mobility, ruptured by Covid-19, has strong implication for the equity and quality of learning catering for diverse student needs. Covid-19 has highlighted the class and racial divisions and exposed the inequities of schooling around the world, including the special needs of students in war-torn and conflict zones where there are large displacements of families and an increasing number of refugee students who lack the basic schooling infrastructure. In the developing world students need curricula and pedagogies that address local needs, that encourages the design in curricula where students can recognize their own cultures and histories. Increasingly in the developed world also students are voting with their feet as many countries face student disaffection with school and high rates of truancy. As Wei points out in his introduction teacher education needs to be able to address the issues of equity and diversity, and to design ways of increasing student participation and engagement. This means increasing the awareness of student teachers', often recruited from the middle class, greater intercultural understanding, moderation a close of the language of instruction and textbooks to reflect minorities, increasing social inclusiveness through culturally responsive pedagogies, and developing new opportunities

for all students to achieve, as well as designed enhanced learning cultures that enable the ongoing assessment of pedagogical practices.

Diversity issues are most often tied issues of equity and social justice, and we need to better understand the attitudes, values and beliefs of teachers and administrators if we are to remove barriers to change. We need also to cultivate educational leadership that is sensitive to equity, diversity and social justice where such leadership takes responsibility for advocating change based on an understanding of policy and the latest empirical research. These issues of social justice most often require also an analysis of power in relation to social identity politics, disability, and neoliberal policy demands for high-stakes testing and teacher accountability. Diversity studies, social justice that recognizes race, class and gender divisions, and inclusiveness that requires equitable access for all students are emblematic social and political issues that reflect wider societal issues. Only by attending to them and seeking transformations through more responsive and equal student learning, pedagogies and teaching strategies, can we begin to address the generational and structural issues.

This special issue reviews the diversity and equity literatures in relation to studies in the US, Canada, New Zealand, South Korea, China. This special issue makes important move in the right direction both theoretical and empirical studies 'on how to support pre-service and in-service teachers to make schooling a more inclusive, equitable, and empowering experience for all students.' We congratulate Wei Liao on his special issue and also thanks and acknowledge the group of international collaborative experts whom he has recruited to provide up-to-date analysis in Equity-Oriented Teacher Education.

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