

Fall 2015

Editorial

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Recommended Citation

Fiore, Lisa (2015) "Editorial," *Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism, and Practice*: Vol. 7 : Iss. 1 , Article 2.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/jppp/vol7/iss1/2>

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Editorial

Lisa Fiore



As guest editor, I am truly honored to introduce the Fall 2015 issue of the *Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism, and Practice (JPPP)*. This special issue, focused on Higher Education, reflects a tremendous collaboration between two academic institutions—Lesley University in Cambridge, MA (United States) and Achva Academic College in the Negev region of Israel. When educators from these respective institutions first met in 2013, we conceived of a themed issue that would explore challenges, questions, and achievements in the field of higher education, and would open dialogue among authors, readers, practitioners, and policy-makers. The individual articles represent collaborative efforts that reach across borders of cities and countries, and across barriers that traditionally exist between professor and student. Our goal is to provide insights into current higher education practices that focus on students, faculty, and the broader educational values that inspire the work of an academic community.

I wish to thank several individuals who contributed significantly to the production of this current issue. First, Dr. Sara Zamir has been a wonderful colleague in this scholarly endeavor. Her consistent enthusiasm and organization was critical to the successful evolution of our work. I would also like to thank Dr. Vivien Marcow-Speiser—the visionary who first invited the educators from Lesley University and Achva Academic College faculty to a table in Cambridge, MA. It was at this first meeting that the idea for this issue was born. Her vitality and strong relationships in the U.S. and Israel served as the foundation and spirit that guided our collaborative process. Danielle Powell, our eLearning and Instructional Support (eLIS) team member, provided kind and intelligent expertise that resulted in the successful presentation of content that is accessible for readers. Her steadfast support is critical to the mission of the *Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism, and Practice*, primarily that the issues are accessible to a global readership. And finally, Arlene Dallal, Professor and Executive Editor of the *JPPP*, remained a constant partner throughout the entire editorial process. Even during her academic sabbatical leave (2015-16), while I am assuming the Executive Director duties, her wisdom and passion have been invaluable. I am truly grateful for her friendship.

This issue provides a kaleidoscopic view of the Higher Education landscape. First, Vivien Marcow-Speiser and Samuel Schwartz document the groundbreaking educational programming that Lesley University developed in Israel, thus laying the foundation for this special issue. They focus specifically on the challenges of culturally-responsive teaching in a war-affected area, and highlight the impact that such programs have, for generations of citizens, in communities and the broader society. Both an historical account and motivational piece, this article suggests avenues to empowerment. Donna San Antonio focuses the lens onto student experiences in college settings, specifically examining the role of college counselors in light of typical developmental and cultural challenges for college students. Co-authors Chelsea Levy and Tuyet-Mai Hoang provide a critical perspective to the work, including key issues that arose out of the Lives in Transition Project – a multi-year research project that examined conditions that impact transitions in the lives of adolescents and young adults. Excerpts from student narratives provide a strong and compelling base from which the research findings include implications for counseling supports for students on college and university campuses. Authors Angelica Pinna-Perez, Kazuyo Kubo, and Joshua Baldwin pose the question – what about supports for university faculty? Specifically, the authors present first-hand accounts of professional development opportunities available for first-year faculty at Lesley University. As a result of their collaboration and analysis, the authors present current and aspirational goals for creating a “culture of care” that is anchored in institutionally supported mentorship for all faculty.

Picking up the theme of examining the work environment, author Nicola Blake presents discoveries made by faculty and students at a community college. She argues that perceptions of work, as conveyed through popular culture, influence students’ notions of work, career, and passion in general. Blake describes how specific teaching practices, such as writing exercises, encourage exploration of individual theories and expectations and can lead to new understandings.

Students’ perceptions are also presented in Barbara Kolan’s and Joanne McNeish’s article, which provides an international view of technology in classrooms. Using data from Israel and Canada, the authors investigate

students' ideas about modes of delivery – paper (i.e., textbook) versus digital (i.e., online). Their research illuminates how educators can best support students, as well as how educators might gain professional development to best meet the needs of students. Themes that emerge from this work resonate with predictable developmental challenges that students encounter, and novel experiences that impact teaching and learning. Efrat Kass and Erez Miller also examine teaching and learning, and specifically focus on teachers' self-efficacy in the classroom. They ask a fundamental question—do teacher education programs enhance practicing teachers' sense of self-efficacy? Is there an aspect of teacher training that will contribute to a teacher's greater impact over the first few years of teaching, and how is that best measured? How will that translate into more meaningful classroom experiences for students? Next, the article by authors Sara Zamir and Heidi Flavian focuses on a subject – college entrance exams – that is currently the subject of much debate in countries around the world. Their perspective as Israeli educators provides a personal, as well as political angle on this issue that resonates with themes woven throughout this entire special issue. Themes such as integrity, accountability, and equity are explored and raise questions about responsibility and values in higher education.

I hope this issue prompts reflections on and discussions about current practices in Higher Education, as well as the assumptions and biases that influence decision-making and therefore inspire critical analysis. The complex interplay of vital issues that impacts citizens in local, national, and international arenas. This themed issue of *JPPP* is but one step toward reaching across borders – physical and metaphorical – in the interest of educating the world's citizens with integrity and equity.

The Editorial Board encourages submissions of articles for future issues of *JPPP*, as well as relevant book reviews and mentoring of students' submissions. The Journal is particularly interested in directly addressing linguistic pluralism by publishing articles in languages other than English, when possible. Authors who can submit two versions of their article, one in English and one in another language, are encouraged to do so. For further information contact us at jppp@lesley.edu.