

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Technology For All?

The impact of technology on knowledge production and educational development

As modern technology is rapidly changing the nature of knowledge production, it is becoming increasingly important in the field of educational development to examine whether, as a result, these changes are fostering inclusion or creating greater disparity. In the "Information Age," technological innovation, theoretically, should broaden access to education and encourage sustainable development. Many in the educational development field ascribe a transformative role to technology, regarding the ability to acquire and use "knowledge" as critical to developing human capital. Others question whether technology is being used as a panacea for complex educational development problems, questioning who is generating "knowledge," for whose benefit, and with what future implications.

This issue of CICE examines the salient matters involving knowledge and technology that concern international educational development. The present articles raise evocative questions about values placed on various types of "knowledge," how "knowledge" is evaluated by learning institutions, and how these various ways of viewing "knowledge" shape policy.

Among policymakers in economically developing countries, such as Brazil, a dichotomy exists where "knowledge" is defined either in terms of market value, or in terms of social development. The proposed National System of Evaluation of Higher Education (SINEAS) stimulates discussion on the priorities of higher education. Canen's "Institutional Evaluation, Knowledge and Multiculturalism: Some ways ahead in Brazilian higher education" illustrates how such policies seem to support a product-oriented approach to education and knowledge production. In "Computers in Ghanaian Secondary Schools: Where does equality come in?" Mfum-Mensah discusses how weak policy design results in failure to reach those who need to benefit most from technology in education. Mfum-Mensah examines Ghana's educational policy in historical context to question whether technology will exacerbate or ameliorate social disparities.

The notion of technology as a great equalizer is also explored on levels other than socio-economic disparity. In "Student-faculty power/knowledge relations: The implications of the Internet in the College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University" Al-Harathi and Ginsburg look at the power dynamic between two groups of participants, questioning the extent to which technology can transform this dynamic. Does the "Internet culture" challenge traditional notions of authority/knowledge and pedagogy, or does culture shape Internet use? What happens when the two are ideologically different? Shin and Cho's "The Culturally Situated Process of Knowledge Production in a Virtual Community: A case of hypertext analysis from a university's ClassWeb discussion boards" also examines the dynamics of power and knowledge. Their article questions whether mainstream uses of technology in higher education exacerbate "disability" in the broadest sense of the term. The definition of "disability" in this context is non-native English-speakers in English-only virtual learning environments. The article

demonstrates how certain types of communication and literacy are favored over others and, as a result, exclude certain students from engaging in the activity of knowledge production. "Distance, Disability and the Commodification of Education: Web accessibility and the construction of knowledge" by Foley analyzes the ideologies surrounding various types of learners, and web accessibility. Like Canen's article, Foley looks at the "marketizing" of disability in online instruction.

As demonstrated in this collection of articles, the complexities of how knowledge and authority are negotiated resonate throughout educational development policy and practice. This issue of CICE questions whether the current direction of policy and practices related to technology