

**A Vibrant Field, an Evolving Journal:  
Editorial Introduction for Fall 2016 Open Theme Issue**

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The field of comparative and international education has undergone significant shifts in its methods and subjects of comparison in the last century. In its formative years, early comparative research took the form of historical and cultural inquiry, which were deeply rooted in the understanding of local contexts. Later in the post-WWII era, shaped by societal need to generalize practical theories for development, comparative analysis became focused on cross-national and scientific comparisons of variables across societal contexts. More recently in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, motivated by the incompleteness of universal metanarratives, comparativists began reflecting and became engaged in critiquing and mapping how socially accepted ideas and standards are manufactured and transmitted by various actors. These phenomena reflect the additive, open, and energetic host-nature of comparative research. Over the past 19 years, *Current Issues in Comparative Education* (CICE) has diligently supported this progress by providing a welcoming space for timely and critical discussions concerning specific ideas as well as theoretical reflections on the development trajectory in the field of comparative and international education.

In this process, members of CICE have produced over 30 issues covering a variety of important topics in the growing field of comparative and international education. One way to assess the scope of CICE's impact is to examine the different topics we have discussed. Each of CICE's past publications have helped expand our knowledge on a special issue or in a specific topic area. This is evident from CICE's very first *Are NGOs Overrated?* issue to the most recent *Innovative Methods in Comparative and International Education* issue. Another approach to understand how CICE's published work contributes to the larger field is to look at the number of citations of articles published on CICE. For instance, according to Google Scholar, Brian Street's (2003) *What's 'new' in New Literacy Studies? Critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice* from Volume 5, Issue 2, has been cited more than 1,200 times, being our most cited article to date. At CICE, we pride on our scholarly contributions to the academic community.

Beginning with this issue, CICE will provide more space for timely discussions on an array of topics by producing a series of open theme issues. These open issues welcome articles on any subject in the field of comparative and international education or in the

related disciplines (e.g. anthropology, history, philosophy, political science, sociology, and economics). With this first open theme issue, we hope to establish a precedent whereby each year CICE produces one issue with an open theme in the fall and another special theme issue in the spring. The editorial board hopes that this new strategy will allow the journal to remain a staple of timely research, and at the same time, also allow quality and depth of research to remain a leader in our field.

For our first open theme issue, we received a record number of manuscript submissions. We find this broad interest as both a conviction to the high quality of CICE's contents and as kind support for our new open theme strategy. In the remainder of this issue, CICE presents seven research projects that our reviewers and editors recommended. These studies, as we intend in all our future open theme issues, cover a broad spectrum of topics and offer a wide range of perspectives.

Using a case of pre-primary teacher training in Tanzania, **Bethany Wilinski, Cuong Huy Nguyen, and Jessica Landgraf** highlights the salience of culture and context in program implementation and evaluation. Wilinski et al.'s study is connected to the larger global discussion on preparing qualified teaching professionals and offers important insights for early childhood policy making in developing regions. **Tim Monreal** illustrates how International Baccalaureate (IB) creates a unique space for international education in public schools. Monreal's research not only presents an interesting examination of IB's proliferation in the U.S., but also articulate a novel perspective in analyzing the use and framing of space in schools. **Rebecca Ipe** uses participatory methods to map the educational experiences of girls from low-income households in urban India and uncovers the often overlooked student perspective of education attainment. By providing an insightful account of first-generation formal schooling attendees, Ipe's study also contributes to the broader literature on the relationship between schooling and social mobility. **Jin Choi and Thomas Sojer** offers a fresh discussion on aesthetic education in their research article. Juxtaposing eastern and western philosophical, cultural and historical roots, Choi and Sojer explore aesthetics as a complementary approach to formal education. **Anne Campbell** investigates the alumni networks of U.S.-sponsored academic returnees in Georgia and Moldova. Campbell's findings suggest that alumni networks in these contexts function can often positively influence communities and act as catalysts for social activism.

This open issue also includes two studies submitted by current education policy practitioners. **Prashant Jayapragas** outlines the successful experiences of Singapore's Leaders in Education Program (LEP), an intensive school leadership bridging program. From a policy and practitioner perspective, **Jayapragas** reviews critical features of LEP in the context of leadership development and offers recommendations moving forward. **Yoko Mochizuki** presents a timely discussion on education for sustainable development

(ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED). Specifically, Mochizuki argues that the marriage between these two concepts might weaken the transformative potentials that they each possess individually.

Finally, each issue of CICE cannot be made possible without the collective efforts of our reviewers, editors, authors, and most importantly, our readers. With the publishing of our first open theme issue and launch of our new journal strategy, we will continue to take pride on being a respected source for timely and cutting-edge scholarly debates in comparative and international education. It is certain that we will continue pushing forward the boundaries of our field and engaging broader academic and practitioner communities.

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