



## Editorial



Inequality continues to occupy a central focus in the articles selected for Volume 45. In the article titled: 'Unequal Inclusion: Experiences and Meanings of School Segmentation in Mexico' Gonzalo Saravi points out that the system is biased from the beginning. The poor attend public schools; the more wealthy attend private schools. This leads to social segmentation which in turn affects student performance and has adverse consequences for socialization. In the article titled: 'Ready for School? Impact of Delayed Primary School Enrollment on Children's Educational Outcomes in Rural China,' Qihui Chen finds that a boy who has to delay entry into primary school is associated with an 11% greater chance of being held back in grade one and reduces the probably by 6% for both boys and girls to gain entry to middle school.

In their article on Egypt titled: 'Is Basic Education Free in Egypt a Reality or a Myth?' Ragui Assaad and Caroline Kraft find that in spite of a long history of legislation guaranteeing free basic education in reality it is not free. Privileged families maintain their advantages through the purchase of private tutoring. This, in turn, has adverse consequences on completion rates. The authors argue for supplements to basic public education in an attempt to equalize opportunities.

Changing pedagogy from the didactics of lecture to the interaction of child-centered learning has been a preoccupation of development education for half a century. Both the virtues and the problems are well known and emerged, once again, in volume 45. In their article titled: 'Perceptions of Korean NGO's for education and education development projects' Hwanbo Park, Hanbyul Lee and Hyesung Cho summarize the opinions of staff in the NGO's supported by Korea's program of foreign assistance. The projects tend to use a child-centered approach in hopes of gaining short term tangible results. The staff of the NGO's however perceived a 'gap' between the intended policies and the action on the ground suggesting a level of unrealism in the former. In their article titled: 'Translating Theory into Practice: Making Meaning of Learner-Centered Education Frameworks for Class-room Based Practitioners,' Heather Lattimer focuses on the meaning of 'learner-centered learning' and questions how it can be applied. By observing two different classrooms in some depth, she finds that there are differences in teaching practice even following 'child-centered' theories. In the article titled: 'Perspectives on Australian, Indian and Malaysian approaches to STEM Education,' Bibi Thomas and James Watters investigate inter-country differences in the degree to which current models increase or decrease the propensity of students to be interested in STEM subjects. They

find that the influence of constructivist inspired student centered learning is 'Western' in origin and may act to decrease interest in STEM subjects in Malaysia and perhaps India whereas traditional didactic approaches may help maintain the demand for STEM subjects. They also question the efficacy of current models of pedagogy in Australia which fail to engage students' long term interest in STEM subjects.

Interest in school quality remains high. In their article titled: 'How Do Student and School Characteristics Influence Youth Academic Achievement in Ghana? A Hierarchical Linear Modeling of Ghana YouthSave Baseline Data,' Gina Chowa, Rainier Masa, Yalitza Ramos, and David Ansong find the age, gender, academic self-efficacy, and commitment to school are significantly associated with performance on tests of math and English; class size and the availability of toilet facilities are associated with performance in English. In the article titled: 'Determinants of Grade Repetition in Primary Schools in Sub-Saharan Africa: An event history analysis of rural Malawi,' Kyoko Taniguchi demonstrates that grade repetition lowers academic performance and is associated with school absences. Repetition is affected by birth order, the number of school meals/week in grade five and larger classes. In the article titled: 'The Determinants of Compulsory Education Performance of Migrant Children in Beijing; An Analysis of two cohorts,' Xin Hong, Hui Zhang, and Haogen Yao find that school performances was affected by age, gender, family income, parental education, income and the degree of satisfaction with the school. Family income was important only for females in grade one while other factors such as school leadership, educational expectations and time for study also had an effect. The degree to which home or school influences are predominant remains one of the long-standing issues in our field. These studies, and new ones, will continue that debate and hopefully will lead to considerable insight.<sup>1</sup>

The world has acquired a large and diverse variety of international data sets on academic achievement.<sup>2</sup> These are

<sup>1</sup> Heyneman, S.P. (2015) "The Heyneman/Loxley Effect: Thirty Years of Debate," pp. 150–67 in Simon McGrath and Qing Gu (Eds.) *Routledge Handbook on International Education and Development*. London: Routledge Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Heyneman, S.P., Lee, B. (2012) "Impact of International Studies of Academic Achievement on Policy and Research," pp. 37–74 in Leslie Ann Rutkowski, Matthias von Davier, and David Rutkowski (Eds.) *Handbook of International Large Scale Assessment: Background, Technical Issues, and Methods of Data Analysis*. 2012 London: Chapman and Hall Publishers and (2014) "International Large Scale Assessments: Uses and Implications," (2014) in Helen Ladd and Peg Goertz (Eds.) *Handbook of Research in Education and Finance* New York: Routledge/Taylor and Francis.

now available for systematic exploitation. One example is the article titled: 'Reading Achievement Progress Across Countries,' by Maciej Jakubowski and Artur Pokropek. They use data sets from totally different sources, collected at different times, to estimate changes in reading over time. The question they have concerns reading progress across countries which track early and those which track later. This unusual use of different data sets might establish a precedent for other scholars.

School autonomy is of interest. In the article titled: 'Autonomy and Control: The struggle of minivan schools<sup>2</sup> in China,' Ying Wang and Raymond Chan characterize private schools as being an antidote to bureaucratic control, but they have a difficult time establishing their autonomy. Minivan schools use for sets of strategies to bypass central control. These include: (i) isolation (ii) avoidance (iii) advocacy and (iv) capitalization.

The connection between crime and education is a new and unusual interest. In the article titled: 'Education and Crime Engagement in South Africa: a national and provincial perspective,' Petronella Jonck asks the degree to which crime can be predicted by educational attainment and discovers that it does not delineate crime types but that completion of grade 12 decreased the likelihood of being incarcerated.

Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT) has been a favorite policy instrument to increase the incentives for positive behavior. In the article titled: 'Conditional Cash Transfers and Improved

Educational Quality: A Political Search for the policy link,' Michelle Morais de Sa e Sliva tests the effects of CCT policies in New York City, Columbia and Brazil. She finds, however hopeful when they were outlined, that they have had only modest impact on the educational policy.

Early childhood education is also a continuing interest. In the article titled: 'Rethinking Play: a Postcolonial Feminist Critique of International Early Childhood Education Policy,' Mathangi Sub-rananian explores the international assumption that play helps generate individual cognitive development. She observes that play may lead to collective (rather than individual) social progress. Her conclusion is that ideas about the purposes of play and how it is defined can increase the accuracy in the definition of program purposes and program quality.

Lastly we have the theme of the affect of education on one's attitudes and behavior. In the article titled: 'The Courage to Express Myself: Muslim Woman's Narrative of Self-Empowerment and personal development through university studies,' Anat Gilat finds that the university experience helps Muslim women develop through three stages: (i) awareness of gender regulation (ii) moral resistance and (iii) self-empowerment.

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