



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

International Journal of Educational Development

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ijedudev

Editorial



Volume 52 contains 11 articles, three pertain to China, two to Latin America and six to Eastern and Southern Africa. Each of the three articles on China concern the differences in social status among schools and students. In their article titled: “School Context and Instructional Capacity: A Comparative Study of Professional Learning Communities in Rural and Urban Schools in China” authors Dan Wang, Jingying Wang, Hui Li and Ling Li analyze differences in instructional capacity building. They conclude that teachers and teaching are strongly shaped by the organizational context and that the quality is lower in the rural contexts. In the article titled: “Equity and Access to Higher Education in China: Lessons from Hunan Province for University Admissions Policy,” authors Qiong Jia and David Ericson conclude that students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, better high schools, and more urban homes are more likely to be admitted to prestigious colleges. This is what we might expect. But on the other hand, in the article titled: “A Longitudinal Mixed Methods Study of Parents’ Socioeconomic Status and Children’s Educational Attainment in a Chinese City,” authors Sung won Kim, Edward Kim, Amy Wagaman and Vanessa Fong find something surprising. They discover that children of working class fathers were more likely to gain admission to a prestigious high school and obtain a bachelor’s degree. They also discover children of low income parents were more motivated to gain upward social mobility through academic achievement. What might we conclude from these apparently inconsistent findings? Perhaps we might conclude two things. Advancement in school is largely dependent on the ambition and demand to work hard on behalf of students. Secondly, the cultural circumstances by which children from wealthier home backgrounds may have an advantage, can shift. Over time, children from wealthier backgrounds may become more complacent; they may come to believe that advancement is more by birthright than achievement. When this occurs schools may well live up to their potential of being society’s mechanism not of reinforcing existing social differences but in challenging them (Heyneman, 2016).

The articles pertaining to Latin America concern the influence of in-school bullying and the degree to which local education strategies are genuinely local. In the article titled: “The Impact of Bullying on Students’ Learning in Latin America: A Matching Approach for 15 Countries,” authors Marcos Delprato, Kwame Akyuempom and Mairead Dunne show that students who are victims of being bullied have lower academic performance. In the article titled: “Policy Formation in the Context of Global Governance: Rational, Organizational, and Political Perspectives on Policymaking in El Salvador,”

Brent Edwards argues that the strategic plans of the ministry of education in El Salvador, while portrayed as locally-designed, was in fact the product of multiple international organizational actors.

Of the six articles pertaining to Sub-Saharan Africa, one concerned the potential counter-productive influences of the current higher education incentives. In the article titled: “Academics as Rent-Seekers: Distorted Incentives in Higher Education, with Reference to the South African Case,” Sean Muller argues that (i) international ranking, (ii) publication-based incentives, and (iii) the process of competition for grants has contributed to distorted and costly behavior in South African universities. In the article titled: “Decision-making in African Universities Demands Rigorous Data: Evidence from Graduation Rates at Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM) in Mozambique,” Nelson Zavale points out that graduation rates at UEM may be different from the official figures and that greater rigor is needed to strategically inform decision-making.

In the article titled: “Enhanced Community Capital from Primary School Feeding and Agroforestry Program in Kenya,” David Borish, Nia King and Cate Dewey point to the success of school feeding and agroforestry information in elementary schools which had the effect of increasing school attendance and academic performance, and may have long term effects on child health, agroforestry knowledge, tree planting crop and tree diversity, household income and community/family relationships. Also in Kenya there is additional evidence of effectiveness. In the article titled: “Uhusiano Design for Learning,” Christopher Johnstone, Acacia Nikoi and Ndungu Kahihu point out that multiple teachers, ‘hands-on’ learning and confidence together act to improve the performance of traditionally marginalized learners. From Uganda too there is evidence of effective interventions. In the article titled: “The African Storybook, Teachers’ Resources, and Pedagogical Practices,” Espen Stranger-Johannessen describes what happens when teachers are able to utilize available African stories from a specially-designed website. This helps to expand the repertoire of teaching methods and topics.

Northern Malawi was the first area in Sub-Saharan Africa to achieve universal school attendance and literacy (Heyneman, 1972). Now the subject of interest is organizational efficiency. In the article titled: “Failing to Progress or Progressing to Fail? Age-for-Grade Heterogeneity and Grade Repetition in Primary Schools in Karonga District, Northern Malawi,” Bindu Sunny, Markus Elze, Menard Chihana, Levie Gondwe, Amelia Crampin, Masoyaona Munkhondya, Scotch Kondowe, and Judith Glenn argue that in grades 1–3, underage students do not repeat but that over-age students have 30% less repetition. On the other hand, in grades 7–8

neither under- or over-age was associated with repetition, but overage was associated with a tendency to drop out of school.

Heyneman, S.P., 1972. The formal school as a traditional institution in an underdeveloped society: the case of Northern Malawi. *Pedagog. Hist.* 12 (November (2)), 460–472.

References

Heyneman, S.P., 2016. The Heyneman/Loxley effect: three decades of debate. In: McGrath, S., Gu, Q. (Eds.), *Routledge International Handbook on Education and Development*. Routledge, Oxford, pp. 150–168.

Editor-in-Chief
Stephen P. Heyneman