

# Éditorial

---

## **Inclusive Habitus**

Thomas Ryan

The following articles have been submitted to the Canadian Journal of Education. Each submission was evaluated and approved for publication in this issue. Each of the authors is a researcher who wanted to be published; they want to be heard, and most likely they would like to influence readers by providing perspective and an understanding of certain issues related in some aspect of education. The authors are also inquirers who have searched, questioned, reflected, and now they are ready to intervene just as Freire (1998) confessed many years ago: “I search, because I question, and because I submit myself to questioning. I research because I notice things, take cognizance of them. And in so doing, I intervene. And intervening, I educate and educate myself” (p. 35). Like Freire, each author searches, reflects and writes to intervene, to educate and provoke readers to question what is known, what has been experienced and what is possible.

The search to answer questions is uncertain just as knowledge is not certain, but is uncertain, and at times ambiguous (Berlin, 1998). Hence the need to reflect upon what is currently known, and from time-to-time, to update an understanding or a position with new information. This renewal and effort to change suggests this may be a frequent and commonplace activity for all of us. As our daily routines unfold we sense, absorb, respond and interact with our environment. People change via new experiences which are blended with past experiences and this habitus becomes “. . . a set of dispositions, reflexes and forms of behaviour people acquire through acting in society. It reflects the different positions people have in society” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 19). Perhaps, by reading the new articles in this issue, the experience will intervene, inform and slightly alter your habitus.

Each author argues for inclusion and change. For example, the educational experiences of Black GTA students are explored using their narratives to define the experiences

of all Black students. The reader learns about the exclusion of Black female students, creating gaps and silences in scholarship, which has implications and potential negative effects on their mental and physical well-being. A second article similarly addresses the need to be inclusive by focusing on the unique needs of immigrant students, arguing for greater attention to the socio-economic challenges immigrant students disproportionately face. The reader is persuaded to reflect upon the importance of current policy coherence that may be wanting and collaboration among ministry sectors.

In another article a group of researchers also calls for improved collaboration and coherence among educational stakeholders. Stakeholders such as the Ontario Ministry of Education, the Ontario College of Teachers, School Boards, and Faculties of Education are urged to revisit the importance of the internationalization of teachers' preparedness to meet one province's (Ontario) objectives of inclusiveness, diversity, and equity in its public education. Again, the term inclusion surfaces. Inclusion can be understood as a "process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults" (UNESCO, 2009). Inclusion is a current global concern emphasized in the concept note for the 2020 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report on inclusion which addresses inclusion in education, drawing attention to all those excluded from education.

Improving, changing and working together in a collaborative and coherent manner is emphasized in another article which claims that coalitions of support and opposition to a school system merger in Ontario are complex and not driven by a single obvious cleavage. The authors believe political mind-sets and religious identities are associated with school system attitudes. However, identity can be a reflection of "interactions between themselves and the community they engage in" (Biklen, 2000, p. 340), hence the notion that Catholic education (identity) can have a much more powerful impact than the public education system is explored and examined to provoke the reader to reflect on their current habitus.

Behind each education policy is a group of authors who have habitus, a disposition that causes certain reflexive thought and action sometimes visible in new policy yet mostly covert within the lines of policy text. Our modern educational systems are policy and practice driven yet the need for change seems omnipresent. While there are barriers to policy change and inclusionary practice, change is commonplace, which is what another article herein, argues.

It seems that traditional textbooks are being replaced in many instances by digital alternatives. In fact, the authors emphasize the importance of user-friendliness, low-cost,

accessible, and portable interactive e-texts. It is claimed that the sustained introduction of e-texts will continue to encounter resistance from some educators, yet there is a need to explore how barriers might be minimized and benefits might be maximized to have most impact on student learning experiences. Reading this issue may remind some that educational equity is only maintained by changing the dominant curriculum, pedagogy and systems, to remove barriers to learning and participation through inclusionary practices that incorporate physical, social, psychological and systemic dimensions.

### References

- Berlin, I. (1998). *The proper study of mankind: An anthology of essays*. London, Pimlico.
- Biklen, D. (2000). Constructing inclusion: Lessons from critical, disability narratives. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 4(4), 337-353.
- Bourdieu, P. (2000, June). The politics of protest. <http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/sr242/ovenden.htm>
- Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy and civic courage*. Lanham, MD. Rowman & Littlefield.
- UNESCO. (2009). *Policy guidelines on inclusion in education*. Paris, France: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2020). Concept note for the 2020 Global Education Monitoring report on inclusion. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265329>