

Introduction to Fall 2023 Issue

Gabriela Walker
National University

In the era of globalization, commodification, and technologization, where we strive to find new resources (in the unexplored oceans, deserts, moon, or other planets), to invent and enterprise for the advancement of industrialization, and to insert artificial intelligence (AI) into various areas of development, we must remember the most important resource that the humankind can mine: the people, the individual, the human factor. Our human uniqueness and values must be valorified and emphasized. We must return to the essence of humanity, of what the human kind stands for, beyond all the other possible resources from the environment. We must return to the core values of the human condition so that we will not depart from social justice, but surpass it, and fulfill the promise of human dignity.

Without human values there is no humanity. There is no “us.” We can do this by implementing what Regilme (2019) is suggesting in his essay, fighting for: “(1) a shift from the Western human rights to the more inclusive and pluralist notion of human dignity; (2) the promotion of global justice by rewriting the rules of global economic gover-

Gabriela Walker is a professor in the Department of Special Education at the Sanford School of Education at National University, La Jolla, California. She is the copy editor for Issues in Teacher Education. Email address: gwalker2@nu.edu

© 2023 by Caddo Gap Press

Volume 32, Number 2, Fall 2023

nance; and (3) the mandatory political education on human rights and human dignity” (p. 279).

The act of education was always a political and social act of forming the next generations. Hence, we, as educators, have the power of forming the new human beings into beings that practice global justice and honor human dignity. It is only through human-designed and human-delivered education that the mirror neurons, strongly correlated with empathy and other human-specific traits (Corradini & Antonietti, 2013), are activated in children. It is only through relationships and interactions that neurodivergence in people can be developed and honored. It is only through reciprocity, interconnection, and comparison amongst ourselves and with higher standards that we can become self-reflective and be capable of growth and self-actualization. It is only through the human factor that we can deliver trauma-informed approaches in education, that we can form early attachment in shaping personality traits, and that we can deliver education and society from stigma and injustice.

The articles in this issue of *Issues in Teacher Education* advocate for just that: capitalizing on the human factor with its diversity, beauty, and uniqueness. The first article by Drs. James Brian Hancock and Jack Taylor Poling advocates for using veteran teachers as resources not just for their expertise in their respective fields, but actually exploiting their wisdom for innovating solutions in education and developing motivation for professional development.

Next, two emerging scholars, who just graduated with their doctoral degrees, are summarizing their best work so far. Dr. Sam R. Humphrey is using the vast experience of selected California K–12 public school superintendents representing a variety of demographics to advocate for a change in legislation in regards to independent study guidelines and funding formulas to support innovative approaches through virtual learning, so we can actually apply the lesson(s) that the virtual education during the pandemic have taught the educational system. Dr. Laurie Balsano Wright is presenting evidence-based data to support that teaching Social-Emotional Learning in schools is vital to student engagement, academic success, development of emotional intelligence, and promote healthy relationships and a positive school culture; the recommendations resulting from this study’s findings could inform the implementation of a comprehensive Wellness Program within the educational settings.

The last three articles are commentaries by experts in their fields. The first commentary by Dr. Terrelle Sales encourages educators to examine their own Self so they can better prepare anti-racist educa-

tors so that we can achieve freedom from oppression as a society. The second commentary by Drs. Kevin M. Wong and Helen Chan Hill advocates for “multilingualism as a desirable skill, lending newfound credibility and value to multilingual speakers, particularly of economically advantageous languages such as Mandarin, Japanese, and Korean”, which brings to the forefront Asian (and, implicitly, others less promoted) languages and heritage as an essential value for forming next generations of all cultures. Dr. Eduardo Munoz-Munoz advocates for teachers to be beacons of linguistic modelling through translanguaging, as the locus of intersection for cultural freedom and democratic manifestations.

We certainly hope that our readers can use the findings from all of these articles in their educational practice to any extent possible and at any level of education.

References

- Corradini, A., & Antonietti, A. (2013). Mirror neurons and their function in cognitively understood empathy. *Conscious Cogn.*, 22(3), 1152-1161. doi: 10.1016/j.concog.2013.03.003
- Regilme, S. S. Jr. (2019). The global politics of human rights: From human rights to human dignity? *International Political Science Review*, 40(2), 279-290. doi: 10.1177/0192512118757129