

From the Editor

This issue is the launch of a revamped version of the *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives* (IEJ). By adding the subheading ‘comparative perspectives’ to the title, it is intended that articles contain comparative elements or perspectives. This subtle change helps to broaden the scope of the journal to include other forms of education that may not necessarily be international in approach but nonetheless significant by virtue of comparison. In addition, this distinction helps engage a larger audience of contributors and readers who consider themselves not only as researchers in the field of comparative and international education, but who work in more specific subject areas such as intercultural studies, international development, internationalisation and globalisation, leadership and policy, multiculturalism, peace studies, post colonialism, and youth studies. Moreover, it adds a new and emerging dimension in which such research can be used to investigate patterns and build upon a body of knowledge relating to systems and structures, places, peoples, organisations, cultures, and best practices to name a few. It is an attempt to scaffold relevant information in such a way as to identify distinctions, underscore unique characteristics or patterns, and identify new trends. In its presentation of stimulating topics and literature reviews, the current issue represents an exercise in explaining education through different ways of thinking, knowing, experiencing and analysing.

In its structure, this issue highlights comparative perspectives that have global, regional, and local implications. While all authors display their perspectives in objective and subjective ways, overall there is a sense of purpose to uncover vital information about specific trends, events, and pedagogies.

The first presentation from Brian Denman provides a backdrop to the wider picture, namely the emergence of world universities and other forms of cross-border higher education. It overviews new developments in types of universities and their subsidiaries but also refers to new ways of thinking about international higher education and its greater purpose.

In the second article Helen Ware considers the question concerning the role one country (Australia) has relative to others within a specific region (Pacific) in the agency improving educational standards. It also provides a useful look into the workings of an aid agency (AusAid) and its perceived role in providing international developmental assistance to Pacific island nations.

The third paper written by Anthony (Tony) Welch focuses on educational reform in Viet Nam, tracing its development to one that is increasingly market-based.

The fourth paper from Joanna Sikora and Lawrence Saha utilises data collected by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) to determine whether social inequality has any influence on students’ educational and occupational expectations. Among their conclusions, a correlation was found that inequality at the country level is positively related to higher educational and occupational

expectations. Although further research is necessary to validate this assertion, this statistical approach to investigating inequality and student expectations through PISA data worldwide is both encouraging and insightful.

Meeri Hellstén identifies in our fifth contribution how cultural and pedagogical transitions experienced by first year international students are not always properly addressed at higher education institutions. The article urges developing and refining quality assurance policies affecting international study, renovating the marketing of such programs, and improving professional practice and pedagogy directed at teaching international students.

The concluding and sixth presentation by Elizabeth Cassity continues to give attention to transition experiences—this time that of African refugees in Australian public schools. The paper describes a system that is ill prepared in assisting African students who have been uprooted from their homelands due to civil conflict and unrest, and identifies how these young African refugees attempt to cope within a new cultural space that is so foreign to them. Elizabeth concludes that education and a community development approach are ways forward, not only because education is a human right but also because it acts as a stabilising factor in affording access to education and in maintaining retention.

The editors and contributors view this journal as a significant stage in the ongoing development of the field of comparative and international education and its subject areas. Preparation for this journal has been a major exercise of both teamwork and coordination in this transition period and I would like to thank all those who assisted in this exciting new direction.

All articles listed have been presented at the Australian and New Zealand Comparative and International Education Society (ANZCIES) 2006 Conference.

Brian Denman
Editor-In-Chief