

From gap to debt: Rethinking equity metaphors in education

Frances K Vavrus

University of Minnesota, US: vavru003@umn.edu

This article draws upon my keynote address delivered at the 44th Oceania and Comparative and International Education Society (OCIES) Conference held at the University of Sydney. It examines how metaphors and other forms of symbolic language used to describe educational dilemmas shape the responses that are imaginable in addressing them. In particular, it argues for a shift from the metaphor of equity gaps to one of education debt so as to recognize more fully the political, temporal, and spatial dimensions of inequity and inequality. The article uses examples from the US and Tanzania but suggests that the metaphor of debt has relevance for countries across Oceania and in other world regions.

Keywords: Achievement gaps; debt; equity; ideology; metaphor; race; Tanzania; United States

INTRODUCTION

The 44th OCIES (previously ANZCIES) Conference brings together students and scholars united by our mutual enmeshment in Oceania and by our common concern with equity gaps—the conference theme—across the Pacific and beyond. The subtheme of the conference, “toward unity, not uniformity,” speaks to our interdependence and to our differences in relation to the historical forces that produce inequities in the first place.

In this article,¹ I expand upon these themes by critically examining the language we use to describe social inequities because these concepts and metaphors make intelligible our experiences, interpretations, and practices as educational researchers and activists (Popkewitz, 2013). I begin by considering the terms *equity* and *gaps* as governing signifiers in contemporary social life and then discuss an alternative metaphor—the *education debt*—proposed by US education scholar Gloria Ladson-Billings (2006). I will explore this metaphor and the ideologies to which it is associated, as well as how it could be applied at different scales—the international, national, and individual—with the US and Tanzania as illustrations. Bringing these different elements together, I seek to make a two-fold argument: first, the metaphors and other forms of symbolic language we use to describe educational dilemmas shape the responses that are imaginable in addressing them; second, studies of equity and gaps need to attend to political, temporal, and spatial dimensions of analysis. Taken together, I am arguing for analyses of equity and, crucially,

¹ The title of this article, and its inspiration, comes from the 2006 American Educational Research Association (AERA) Presidential Address delivered by Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, whose address was entitled *From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in U.S. schools* (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

inequity, which attend to their semiotic, political, historical, and spatial dimensions. My goal is to present a way of thinking about educational equity that might be useful across Oceania and in other world regions because there is considerable unity in our concerns about equity gaps and in how they might be addressed.

EQUITY AND GAPS

The terms *equality* and *equity* are often used interchangeably, even though they are not synonymous. When they are distinguished, equality is typically taken to be the state of being equal, as in equal pay for equal work or equal resources for every child in a school. Equity, by contrast, usually focuses on fairness and inclusion rather than sameness or uniformity (OECD, 2012). However, education scholars who study equity offer a more complex definition (Espinoza, 2007; Smith & Gorard, 2006). For instance, Unterhalter (2009) identifies three different meanings ascribed to the term: *equity from above*, *equity from below*, and *equity from the middle*. The first meaning has to do with rules, laws, and obligations aimed at establishing fairness and enforced by legislative or judicial bodies; the second sense of equity emphasizes “considerate and fair relationships” that foster agency among marginalized individuals and groups (p. 417); and the third usage, which Unterhalter links to capital markets, can be applied to education to mean “the movement of ideas, time, money, skill, organization or artefacts that facilitates ‘investments’ in . . . learning” (p. 421).

In Figure 1, the obligation of equality means every child receives a box with the same dimensions to help them see over the fence and watch the sporting event on the other side. Yet the image illustrates why equal treatment is problematic: Due to differences in ability status and developmental differences, the child in the wheelchair is completely excluded as a spectator, and the girl’s ability to view the game is compromised because the standard-sized box is not sufficient for her needs. In other words, these three children need different kinds of “investments” to enable all of them to watch the game; there is a disparity in the children’s access when rules obligate the provision of the same support—the standard-issue box—because it is not adequate for all of them.

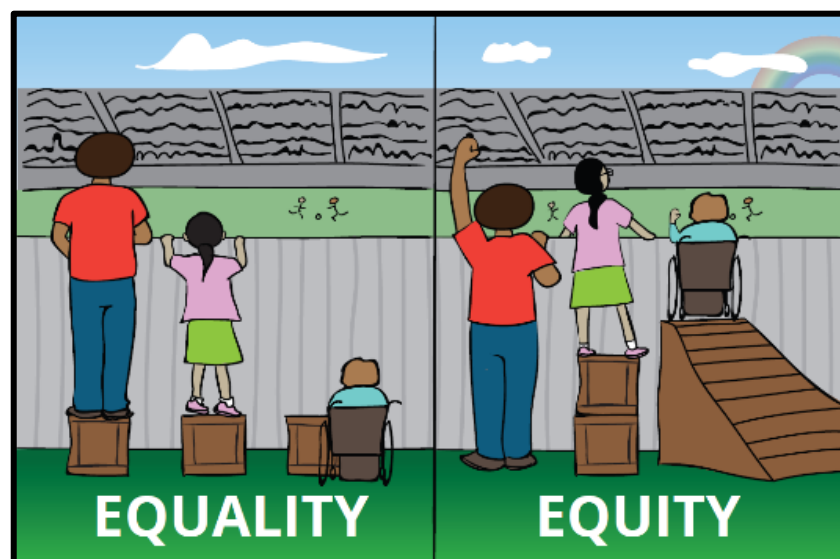


Figure 1: Equality versus equity

Therefore, a focus on fairness would not lead to equal treatment but rather to differential allocation of resources. If one starts with the assertion that every child should be able to watch a sporting event, or participate in the classroom, then it will necessitate different types of support and to different degrees to ensure this occurs. For children to have equality of access, there must be equity in the process of supporting them to gain it.

This image also helps us to think about the different sources of inequity in society and in our schools, and it is a very long list indeed. Disability, gender, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, socioeconomic background, linguistic ability, parental education, gender identity, and school programs and policies themselves are but some of the many sources of disparity that can lead to differences in how students experience schooling and perform in the classroom. A recent OECD report (2012) on equity and quality in education states: “Equity in education means that personal or social circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin or family background, are not obstacles to achieving educational potential (fairness) and that that all individuals reach at least a basic minimum level of skills (inclusion)” (p. 9). The report goes on to note: “Increasingly, it is no longer seen as adequate to provide equal access to the same ‘one size fits all’ educational opportunity. More and more, the focus is shifting towards providing education that promotes equity by recognising and meeting different educational needs” (p. 17).

While this stance by the OECD is important, it does not fully acknowledge the historical conditions that have led certain “personal or social circumstances” to become obstacles in the first place (Esmail, Pitre, & Aragon, 2017). The same is true of the image of the boxes, which could be read as individual problems that need to be compensated, locating the problem in the children rather than in historically-situated social relationships. How, for example, did gender become a barrier to women’s access to higher education in Tanzania? Why would having a physical disability obstruct advancement through schooling in the US? In other words, why do certain circumstances and identities endure as obstacles to educational opportunity in a way that is profoundly unfair?

If the term *equity* captures the notions of fairness and inclusion, then the word *gap* describes the gulf itself between those for whom the educational system seems fair and inclusive, and those who are marginalized by or excluded from it. Few of us want to hear that there is a gap in our knowledge, a gap on our resume, or, more tangibly, a gap in our sweater or in the seat of our pants. In short, the term *gap* directs our attention to a deficit or abnormality—a lack of awareness of important literature or a consistently low pattern of performance on educational assessments.

There are different ways we might think about our response to *the gap* as one of the most important, if not *the* defining metaphor in educational discourses around the world today. Playing with the phrase “mind the gap,” we can discern at least three semantic forms owing to different definitions of the verb *to mind*:

- 1) To object or to take offense, as in “Mind if I smoke?”
- 2) To pay attention to a crack or opening, as the cautious voice on the subway reminds us as we step across the breach from the subway platform onto the train.
- 3) To keep a careful eye on someone or something, as in “Will you mind the children while I run to the store?”

Taking each of these expressions in turn, we might consider, in the first example, a response to the question, “Do you mind if I perpetuate equity gaps in my classroom?” Most educators would respond with a resounding “yes”—“yes, *I do mind* that no

additional support is provided for students with disabilities or minority language students so that they have the means to succeed.” Yet this is the question that goes unspoken by many government leaders who nonetheless allocate tax dollars to support policies that chronically underfund schools and social programs in communities with the highest percentages of minoritized students.

In the U.S., for example, many states and districts rely on property taxes to fund public schooling, and this means that districts where wealthy families reside receive more money for education than districts with poor families. Illinois, for instance, has the most unequal school funding system in the country with districts serving the highest numbers of low-income students receiving almost 20% *less* in state and district funds than wealthier districts (Kadner, 2015). The neoliberal response to such a situation might be *choice*: If parents want their children to attend better schools, they should move to those districts.

What this response ignores, besides the obvious problem that low-wage workers rarely have money saved for a hefty mortgage, is the history of redlining in cities like Chicago, Illinois. Coined by activists in the 1960s in Chicago, the term refers to the practice of employees of home loan associations literally drawing red lines around “questionable areas”—namely, those with large concentrations of African Americans in this case—and refusing to make loans within these areas (Hillier, 2003, p. 139). The term has expanded in its usage to include any systematic discrimination by banks or real estate agents intended to keep certain neighbourhoods homogeneous on the basis of race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, a practice that is illegal but continues to the present (Badger, 2015).

In the second example of a gap as a fissure, we can imagine parents taking their children to kindergarten on the first day of school and hearing from the loudspeakers in the hallway, “Mind the gap.” The parents might look down to see whether there is a crack in the cement flooring they had missed when entering the building. Instead, this is a gap that few American parents will see in kindergarten but will become strikingly hard to miss once national testing begins in 4th grade.

In the most recent analysis of the US National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often referred to as the “nation’s report card,” the reading data for 4th graders already reveal striking gaps between Asian/Pacific Islanders and white students, whose average scores range from 232 to 239, and black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaskan Native children with scores between 205 and 208 (NAEP, 2016). The gap is still evident among students in 12th grade, with scores for African American students at least 10 points below those for any other group, and declining. Relative to white students, there is now a difference of 29 points on this reading assessment where it had been 24 points in 1992 (NAEP, 2016).

In sharing these data, I fully recognize their incompleteness in terms of students’ socioeconomic class, region of the country where they reside, gender, and so forth. However, they do indicate that the warning, *mind the gap*, applies only to some families but not all in the US (and similarly in many other countries of Oceania). For white, middle-class parents whose children have no known disabilities and are cisgendered, they might not notice at all the breaches that are likely to grow from slight fissures in kindergarten to full-blown gaps by the end of the high school.

Turning to the third example of “mind the gap,” it is here that we might take some comfort in the many equity gaps that have been reduced over the years owing to the watchful eye of community activists, parents, teachers, and committed policymakers. In Tanzania, for

instance, the gender gap in primary school enrolment has been eliminated (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2010), and the government's plan to use Swahili, the lingua franca of the nation, as the medium of instruction throughout primary and secondary schooling will undoubtedly help to address educational disparities linked to differences in English proficiency that have a strong class basis (Brock-Utne, 2012). Yet there is also a sense that many long-standing educational gaps in the country, such as those based on region, religious affiliation, and class, persist without much action being taken to remedy them. Moreover, the plan to use Swahili at the secondary level may actually increase class distinctions because parents who can afford to do so are likely to send their children to private, English-medium schools (Mtesigwa, 2001; Vavrus, 2002). Thus, we see some equity gaps remaining stagnant or even growing over time even though policymakers are minding them, and often taking some steps to reduce them.

METAPHOR AND IDEOLOGY

I contend that, cyclical boosts in funding notwithstanding, there is a tacit acceptance of many equity gaps, especially those in education, because *gap* stands in metaphorically for difference and inferiority. In their research on metaphor, linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson explain: "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (2003, p. 6). They argue that dominant metaphors in our society become the way we understand and experience the thing itself. In an extended example of the word *argument* and the conceptual metaphor common in the US, "argument is war," Lakoff and Johnson illustrate with popular phrases like "your argument is indefensible," "I demolished his argument," and "You disagree? Okay, shoot!" (p. 5). They contend that most Americans would not recognize an argument as an argument if it were not confrontational in this way. As they explain, "this is the *ordinary* way of having an argument and talking about one . . . Our conventional ways of talking about arguments presuppose a metaphor we are hardly ever conscious of. The metaphor is not merely in the words we use—it is in our very concept of an argument" (p. 6; emphasis in original).

The study of metaphor is related to the concept of signification, the conveying of meaning. For linguist and literary theorist Roland Barthes (1964), there are two types of signification, the denotative and the connotative. The denotative suggests that there is an objective, value-neutral relationship between certain words, or signs, and what they denote. For example, *gym*, *gymnasium*, *recreation center* all denote the same space in a school where sports are played. There is some kind of objective or literal relationship between this space in a school that we can see and these signifiers of that space. However, this space may take on additional meaning when a new context for its usage arises.

We can consider the example of the term *locker room*, which denotes the portion of a recreation center where one can store and change clothing. Anyone who followed the 2016 US presidential campaign will recall that the term *locker room* took on great connotative significance when Donald Trump dismissed the 2005 *Access Hollywood* recording in which he boasted of sexually assaulting women by using the term "locker-room banter" to characterize, and dismiss the significance of his comments (Burns, Haberman, & Martin, 2016). This, in turn, led to an outpouring of responses from women and men about their own experiences in locker rooms and the kind of banter that is and is not generally deemed permissible, with Trump's violent, misogynistic comments roundly regarded as unacceptable even in such an informal environment. At present in

the US, *locker room* has lost any semblance of value-neutral meaning and, instead, represents an entire value-laden assemblage of patriarchy, privilege, and sexual violence that no longer needs to be spelled out—the phrases “locker-room talk” and “locker-room banter” connote it fully.

Critical media scholars John Fiske and John Hartley suggest that connotations are central to the formation of ideology. They aver: “The way that the varied connotations . . . fit together to form a coherent pattern or sense of wholeness, that is, the way they ‘make sense’, is evidence of an underlying invisible, organizing principle—ideology” (cited in O’Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, Montgomery, & Fiske, 1994, p. 287). This process of “making sense” has been studied by numerous cultural and media studies scholars, but Stuart Hall’s (1997) work stands out, in my view, because it addresses several aspects of ideology that speak directly to the question of how we represent unfairness in school and society.

A central concern of Hall’s (1997) throughout his productive career was the interplay of discourse, power, and representation, particularly but not exclusively as it related to race. In a provocative essay in 1985, Hall delves into the concept of ideology, beginning with the question as to how, in democratic states, “a society *allows* the relative freedom of civil institutions to operate in the ideological field, day after day, without direction or compulsion by the State . . . [and] nevertheless consistently reconstitutes ideology as a ‘structure in dominance’” (p. 100). His response suggests that it is through social practices in a variety of overlapping sites, such as schools, cinemas, and worksites, that we come to “recognize” ourselves, often unconsciously, as the “essential subjects” of ideologies, which Hall defines as “systems of representation materialized in practices” (1985, p. 104). He emphasizes the point that “ideas don’t just float around in empty space. We know they are there because they are materialized in, they inform, social practice. In that sense, the social is never outside the semiotic” (p. 103).

Hall frequently drew upon his background growing up in Jamaica and then moving to the UK and spending his adult life there. In Jamaica, he and his family were considered “coloured,” a category that connoted privilege and status. In contrast, Hall was identified as black by the British with a new set of signifiers used by them to indicate his inferior status (1985). Thus, he interrogated the specific example of the ideologies surrounding the term “black,” particularly those related to place and identity, and he made the critical point that history cannot be ignored when seeking to understand how these discursive formations *continue* to shape social practice: “They leave the traces of their connections, long after the social relations to which they referred have disappeared” (p. 111). I would argue that metaphor, one of the primary building blocks of ideology, is one of the ways by which these traces of social relations are maintained.

SHIFTING METAPHORS: FROM GAP TO DEBT

In her 2006 Presidential Address at the American Educational Research Association, Gloria Ladson-Billings engaged in a compelling analysis of the concept of *gaps* in education that I have long felt warrants more attention by scholars working in other parts of the world where the histories of genocide, slavery, and displacement continue to leave “the traces of their connections” (Hall, 1985, p. 111). In this address, she provides numerous examples of gaps in the US among black, Indigenous, Latinx, and white youth that include test scores but go well beyond into the areas of inequity mentioned earlier that bear on high school drop-out rates, teenage pregnancy, enrollment in advanced

classes, and admission to university. Ladson-Billings points out that many explanations for these differences have been provided over the years, particularly “cultural deficit” arguments that lay blame squarely on the shoulders of those upon whom the label *gap* has been applied.

Rather than the metaphor of the education gap, Ladson-Billings proposes an alternative: the education debt. She explains how the focus on closing achievement gaps, particularly gaps related to test scores, is similar to policymakers concentrating on the federal deficit, an annual concern that does, occasionally, disappear in a given year. In contrast, the federal debt is “the sum of all previously incurred annual federal deficits” (2006, p. 4). Ladson-Billings uses this distinction between a deficit and a debt to argue for a new metaphor:

I am arguing that our focus on the achievement gap is akin to a focus on the budget deficit, but what is actually happening to African American and Latino students is really more like the national debt. We do not have an achievement gap; we have an education debt . . . I am arguing that the historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral decisions and policies that characterize our society have created an education debt. (p. 5)

Ladson-Billings has no shortage of examples regarding the historical conditions of inequity that have produced the education debt today in the US. She identifies policies that long denied schooling to blacks, Latinx, and Indigenous children, followed by gross underfunding of segregated schools or the forced relocation to boarding schools; policies that allowed for differences in wages for the same work; the “redlining” of desirable areas in cities and towns that I mentioned earlier; and health and science policies that allowed for such studies as the infamous Tuskegee research program on syphilis that denied the Black men involved access to treatment once one was found (2006).

Ladson-Billings asks a crucial question for educators to consider: “What is it that we might owe to citizens who historically have been excluded from social benefits and opportunities?” (2006, p. 8). She does not provide an answer to this question, but I believe Stuart Hall does. If, as Hall argues, vestigial ideas are materialized in social practice, then it is to these ideas and to their explicit articulation that we should turn to create greater recognition of the “cumulative effect of poor education, poor housing, poor health care, and poor government services” (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 10). We should be bold in naming them—slavery, colonialism, internment, patriarchy, Islamophobia, homophobia—and in recognizing that they are both “structure[s] in dominance” (Hall, 1985, p. 100) *and* enduring “systems of representation” (Hall, 1985, p. 104).

TANZANIA: SCALES OF DEBT

The systems of representation in which Tanzania, and the wider continent of Africa, are enmeshed are illustrated by a question posed to me by a US 3rd grader during a presentation in her class about Tanzania. The students were studying different countries and continents, and their teacher asked me to talk about my recent trip to East Africa. Therefore, I assembled items that might spark their interest and give a positive picture of the country and its people, from images of Mt. Kilimanjaro to tall buildings and computers in classrooms as one finds in the US. Nevertheless, at the end of the presentation, a little girl raised her hand and asked, “Why are Africans poor?”

Despite my best efforts to present an image of contemporary Tanzania as economically diverse and culturally wealthy, this nine-year old had already embraced an ideology in which Africa is a homogenous space; a continent that connotes poverty; its people the Other. She had embraced the “single story,” a danger perceptively articulated by Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009). This should not be surprising when most Americans’ knowledge of the continent is based on statistics about HIV/AIDS, infant mortality, war, and illiteracy, all of which serve to demarcate the gap between Africa and the West.

This moment in the 3rd grade classroom stayed with me even though my research in Tanzania is not explicitly about ideology or representation, or American children’s views on the continent. In my research beginning in 1996, I was interested in gender equity in secondary schooling, where the gap between girls and boys is decreasing but still only 24% of girls are enrolled compared to 31% of boys (UNESCO, 2012; see also Vavrus, 2003). Then, from 2000 to 2012, I carried out a longitudinal study of secondary school-aged youth on Mount Kilimanjaro who were in their final two years of primary school when we began. There were striking gaps among students at the four primary schools in the study in terms of access to sufficient food, decent roads, electricity, and secondary and tertiary education, and these gaps coalesced around spatial aspects of inequity, or, more specifically, around colonial demarcations that determined where schools and missionary stations would be located (Vavrus, 2016).

By way of background, Tanzania, which had been a German colony from 1890 through World War I and then a British Trust Territory from 1920-1961, had, at independence, begun the process of equalizing opportunity for schooling as part of the country’s larger socialist restructuring program. The government of President Julius Nyerere radically redirected educational resources away from regions like Kilimanjaro that had a disproportionate number of schools owing to the fertile soil and healthy climate that attracted European missionaries and colonial administrators alike (Vavrus, 2003). For instance, in 1951 in the final decade of colonial rule, approximately 62% of children in Kilimanjaro were enrolled in primary school compared to 30% in the rest of the country during the same period (Samoff, 1979). In the early 1970s, as the redistribution plan was beginning to go into effect, the Kilimanjaro region had approximately 25% of the private secondary schools in the country and some 80% of these students came from the region itself even though the population of the region is less than 5% of the total for the country (Samoff, 1979). Today, the number of primary schools in the region is roughly proportional to the population, but the redistribution of resources at the secondary level had a more limited effect. As of 2010, the Kilimanjaro region had the largest number of secondary schools (public and private combined, O- and A-level institutions) in the country (MOEVT, 2010).

In this longitudinal study, we selected the four primary school sites in relation to where they were located on the mountain, but it turned out that their proximity to the German headquarters mattered more than we initially realized. The Tanzanian research team and I interviewed the parents or guardians of 277 students, and we had the students themselves fill out a questionnaire about their performance in school and aspirations for the future, among other topics. We returned to the same families in 2001, 2006, and 2012, and a smaller number of the youth were interviewed in 2007 and 2012. What we sought to study was the impact of attending secondary school on these young people’s lives, even though only about 22% of them did so over the course of the study. However, what we also learned was that vestigial colonial relations had a great deal to do with equity gaps in this

community. For instance, Miti, the school community located closest to the former German headquarters for northern Tanzania, stood out from the other two rural sites of Bonde and Mbali in many ways. First, indicators of household wealth were significantly higher than in the other two rural sites. Families in Miti were much more likely to live in cement homes, have electricity, and always have enough food to eat. Second, youth from Miti were more than three times as likely as students from any of the other sites, including Sokoni, the site in the semi-urban area, to have reached the level of college or university by 2012 (Vavrus, 2016).

There are a number of other examples I could provide, but my point is that the study of equity gaps—in education and other areas of social life—need to attend to spatial and temporal dimensions of analysis. Such analyses are an important counterweight to research on current patterns of inequity and inequality with nary a glance backward. The larger project in Tanzania shows that a critical geography of education would help us to understand how the social production of social space occurs over time and contributes to the formation of educational disparities and their reproduction.

Given this situation, what can one say about the question of education debt? Using the geographic concept of scale, one might consider at the international scale the debt owed to Tanzania by Germany and the UK. Even though colonialism was short-lived in the case of Germany, the Maji-Maji Rebellion of 1905-1907 in response to the imposition of cotton as a cash crop resulted in a famine, still known as the Great Hunger, owing to the burning of Tanzania's land in retaliation by the Germans (Schmidt, 2010). The British did not turn Tanzania into a settler colony as in neighbouring Kenya, where the Mau Mau rebellion against oppressive rule led to extensive incarceration, abuse, and torture, with retributions to those who suffered made only in 2013 (Elkins, 2005, 2013). Nevertheless, the four decades of colonial rule in Tanzania depleted the country of resources it could have used to build an independent nation, and it deprived millions of children of an adequate education.

At the national scale, one could contemplate the debt owed by the Tanzanian government to residents of rural communities like Bonde and Mbali, and those in far less prosperous regions of the country where hundreds of thousands of children do not complete primary school at all as they generally do in the Kilimanjaro region. What would it take for them to receive an equitable allocation of resources—"equity from the middle" as Unterhalter (2009, p. 421) calls it—by allocating *more* resources to enable their students to have equal access to the same quality of schools as their relatively more prosperous neighbours in Miti and Sokoni?

At the smallest of scales, the individual, we might ask ourselves whether we, as researchers, are in debt to the communities where we conduct our studies. Despite the engagement of Tanzanian researchers in this longitudinal project, it is I who has largely benefited from it in terms of prestige and promotions from publishing the requisite number of articles each year to afford an increase in salary. Although I have worked with each of the schools in the study to identify and fund projects deemed important by the community, such as a block of latrines at Mbali and a water tank at Miti, there is also an intellectual debt from sharing knowledge and insights that I have only begun to theorize.

CONCLUSIONS

The equity gaps in our countries and communities are simply too vast for any one of us to imagine closing with his or her actions alone. We need to do more than “mind” them in the sense of watching over them; we need to declare our objection and offense to them, and work with organizations addressing the historical, political, spatial, and semiotic relations that produced and maintain them. This often seems like a daunting task, but we can each find spaces for intervention, especially in our world today where the very concept of equity is under siege.

Our efforts, however small they may seem, should not be seen as isolated islands of action amidst a sea of inequality. Instead, we might recast our work along the lines suggested by Tongan and Fijian writer and anthropologist Epeli Hau‘ofa in his beautiful essay, *Our Sea of Islands* (1994). In it, he asks us to dismiss with the vision of Oceania being “islands in a far sea” and to instead to think of it as “a sea of islands.” He writes:

Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous, Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still, Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean, we must wake up to this ancient truth and together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us again, physically and psychologically, in the tiny spaces that we have resisted accepting as our sole appointed places, and from which we have recently liberated ourselves. We must not allow anyone to belittle us again, and take away our freedom. (1994, p. 160)

May we move in unity to preserve this freedom, recognizing that our countries and communities are not uniform and will require different forms of action to make it so. We share a common sea, and as comparative and international educators, a common commitment to ensuring equity at home and around the world.

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