



Volume 96: Article Summaries

In many instances results are reported which may be disappointing by comparison to the author's anticipations. Not this time. Six articles in volume 96 report the results with positive outcomes. In their article titled: "Foundational Mathematics and Reading Skills of Filipino Students over a Generation," authors Takiko Igarashi and Daniel Suryadarma report on the results national testing over a 16-year period. They find that reading skills increased significantly. They also find that the gender differences in those skills declined and that the differences in performance based on family socio-economic background declined. In their article titled: "Solving It Correctly: Prevalence and Persistence of Gender Gap in Basic Mathematics in Rural India," Upasak Das and Karan Singhal discover that although the gender gap persists in math, over time it declines in reading.

In their manuscript titled: "Does Student Aid Make a Degree More Likely? Evidence of the Permanence Scholarship Program Survival Models," authors Polyana Tenorio de Freitas Silva and Luciano Menezes Bezerra Sampaio present the results of a program to prevent low-income students from dropping out of university by providing them with financial assistance. They find that students in the program had a greater probability of graduation and completed their studies in less time.

In the article titled: "The Impact of Maternal Education on Child Mortality: Evidence from an Increase Tuition Fee Policy in Vietnam," Hang Thu Nguyen-Phung finds that maternal school attainment was associated with a decline in infant mortality, but also that female school attainment declined following the introduction of tuition fees.

In the article titled: "Scholarship for Catching-up? The Indonesian Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) Scholarship Program as a Pillar of Economic Development Policy," M. Aulia Rachman finds that a subsidy of learning at the post-graduate level in Indonesia constitutes a 'pillar' of economic development policy.

In the article titled: "Storybooks in Hand: RCT of a Classroom Library Model," Brahm Fleisch and Volker Schoer describe an intervention of a library reading corner which significantly improved children's access to books in South Africa. On average, children borrowed ten story books each year.

Several articles in Volume 96 take a critical look at trends in the way development specialists characterize their analyses of development progress. The first article will later be grouped with others in a special issue of the IJED titled: "Recommencing School Learning After the Pandemic". The author, Michele Schweisfurth, takes a close look at our understanding of pedagogy. Her article is titled: "Disaster Didacticism: Pedagogical Interventions and the 'learning crisis'".

She focuses on foundational learning, information technology and the systematic classroom observation of teaching practice. In these contexts, she raises five challenges: what are the unintended effects of

using the language of crisis in the learning 'crises? Does the understanding of pedagogy in these measures reflect how teaching and learning functions in different contexts? What evidence is being overlooked? What are the risks of focusing only on literacy and numeracy measurement? And last, what legitimacy do international actors have when they define and measure quality teaching and prescribe interventions? It is likely that we will see these questions frequently raised in the future.

On a parallel challenging track, the article by Anna Robinson-Pant titled: "Education for Rural Development Forty Years On," describes the relationship between education and social change as being analyzed by employing a narrow model and paradigm. She proposes using a social transformational lens which can help shift attention from formal education providers to the political and social actors.

Some articles in volume 96 reiterate anticipated problems. In "The Limits on Critical Voice in Conflict-Affected Universities: Evidence from Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka," Ian Russell reminds us that armed conflict adversely affects a university's ability to use its critical voice and contribute to peace building. In "Rethinking the Global Orientation of World-Class Universities from a Comparative Functional Perspective," Lin Tian points out that universities with different categories of functions have unique but different roles. World class universities have global perspectives and functions whereas local research universities have unique and important local roles.

Other articles in volume 96 illuminate important processes which otherwise might have gone unexplained. In "The Politics of Good Enough Data. Developments, Dilemmas, and Deadlocks in the Production of Global Learning Metrics," Clara Fontdevila analyzes the production of the learning metrics behind the international SDF4 goal. She describes the process as being 'riddled with technical and political difficulties'. Her paper reconstructs the process of negotiation of the data suppliers, statistical routines, and reporting standards. Her analysis offers an understanding of the mechanics of the global quantification and the institutions competing to supply the evidence.

In the paper titled: "Peer Support in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Critical Interpretative Synthesis of School-Based Research" Rafael Mitchell focuses attention on the common practice of pupils teaching one another in resource poor environments. On the one hand the practice supports a 'collectivist orientation' which can be a positive influence on learning. On the other hand, when a pupil teaches another in circumstances of disabilities or linguistic minorities, than the practice may be counter-productive. In sum, peer teaching cannot compensate for exclusionary policies or under-investment.

In "Access to and Demand for Online School Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Japan," Hideo Akabayashi, Shimpei Taguchi and

Mirka Zvedelikova note that traditionally, Japanese education was based on policies of equality. These policies were undercut by the move to on-line learning during COVID. Children from more privileged backgrounds received more help both at school and at home.

In “Gender and/or Religiosity? Intersectional Approach to the Challenges of Religious Women in STEM Fields,” Sabina Lissitsa, Rinat-Tamar Ben-Zamara and Svetlana Chachashvili-Bolotin describe the challenges to female Jewish students in STEM studies who try to balance family and career, alienation, and a prohibitive environment of attitudes and traditions within the religious community. Respondents report that the religiosity components were more challenging than those of gender.

The government in China has a policy to reduce the competition to enter higher education. The policy is titled Synchronous Admission Reform (SAR) which is designed to reduce academic burden and augment a student social development. How have parents reacted to the SAR policy? In the paper titled: “Seeking Balance: Chinese Middle Class Parents’ Choice Imaginaries Under Synchronous Admission Reform” Cheng Zhong describes what happened. Because the new policy essentially challenged the traditional urge to advantage one’s own children in

the competition for post-secondary admission, the parents ‘sought balance’, a way of interpreting the new policy in their own way. This is an important finding which parallels other in-depth analyses of how policy changes are often treated by those to whom the policy is targeted.

Finally, an analysis of Asian international students in Asian countries – do they react to the challenges in ways which differ from Asian students in western countries? In the paper titled: “Because we all Change, right? A Narrative inquiry of an International Student’s Self-formation in South Korea,” author Meerbek Kudaibergenov focuses on a single Asian student amidst the ‘glees and tensions that international education has to offer’. The article ends with the need to consider ways to strengthen ‘agency’ in international students to facilitate self-change and development. Good advice.

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