Introduction

Educational Theory in a Global and Technological Era

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THIS ISSUE ADDRESSES concerns emerging from the assumption, often implicit in an increasing number of educational articles, that education is a sort of causal practice that is closely linked to evidence-based research. Without denying the need for that kind of research, but moving beyond the discussion of measurable benefits, the authors in this volume motivate readers to refocus on educational aims and their relation to what is desirable and good in education. The intersection of globalization and technology provide further grounds for this discussion and for the rethinking of pedagogy. At the core of these thematic papers is the notion that education is a historically contextualized moral practice.

Part I, Educational Theory and Conceptual Issues, opens with Nel Noddings' invited article entitled "Aims, goals and objectives". This article provides a counterpoint to the current emphases on accountability and assessment by reminding the reader of the need to disentangle aims, goals, and objectives which have been collapsed too simplistically into "standards". In line with the notion of teaching as a moral activity, Noddings is not only concerned with student outcomes but also with teaching practices and reasoning about such practices.

Paul Standish in his article "Concepciones rivales de la Filosofía de la Educación" (Competing conceptions in Philosophy of Education) identifies current trends in philosophy of education and he makes a case for the relevance of philosophy of education to educational policy and practice. He makes the case that educational problems are not resolved with new techniques only. They require a clear understanding of issues, the enactment of a comprehensive reflective process, and the development of practical reasoning (*phrónesis*). Philosophy provides the means for those processes. Although Standish uses Great Britain as a point of reference, his paper provides good argumentative grounds for the inclusion of philosophy in teacher preparation programs in general.

James Scott Johnston's article "Philosophy of Education in North America" engages the reader in a comprehensive historical reading of philosophy of education while linking the rise of educational theory to the development of education as a legitimate discipline. Historical self-understanding is offered as a condition for the reconstruction of philosophy that should also include a preoccupation with projects and topics, issues, and practices relevant to philosophy of education. This paper moves away from arguments that take a presentist tone.

Romulo Magsino's article entitled "Globalization and Education in the 21st Century" is motivated by a preoccupation with the unfulfilled goals of globalization, in particular, with global economic growth and improvement of the quality of life. The argument is then constructed around the dominant world view that globalization fosters what is leading to less commitment to the public or to the common good and to cultural homogenization. Magsino sees education as having a critical role in salvaging the goals of globalization. He argues for the possibility of a new pedagogical approach that would enrich critical pedagogy by articulating theories such as cosmopolitanism and global education.

Rosa Bruno-Jofré and Karin G. Steiner in "Fostering educative experiences in virtual high school history" articulate the basis for a critical theoretical perspective from which to think about ICT integration in teaching and learning. The authors ground history teaching in educational aims and in well formulated notions about what constitutes educative experiences. They argue that the pursuit of historical mindedness as an educational aim in teaching history can be fostered by applying cultural-psychological concepts in classrooms that use new technologies. Such applications entail building a knowledge community within the class, and integrating student learning with the cultural practices of historians.

Part II, Educational Theory and the Search for Ways of Constructing Knowledge, includes three articles written by Spanish scholars. In the first one, entitled "Historias de vida y teorías de la educación: Tendiendo puentes" (Life history and educational theories: Building bridges), Jose González Monteagudo focuses on life history as research methodology and as a resource for educational practice. The author proposes the narrative-biographical approach as a tool to build a transgressive theory of education in line with a subjectivist epistemology that goes beyond the positivist, critical, or interpretative paradigm. In the second paper, "La teoría de la educación: Una búsqueda sin término" (Educational theory: a search without ending), Rafael Sáez Alonso argues that educational theory is at the core of education as a discipline. The third paper entitled "Educational Discourse and Educational Practice," by Jaume Trilla Bernet, integrates epistemological issues with a practical "decalogue" that is aimed at supporting reflective practice.

Part III, Open Section, includes two papers, one by the comparative research team of the Faculty of Education, University of Salamanca led by Leoncio Vega Gil and J. Maria Hernández Díaz entitled "Initial practical training trends of primary school teachers: The private school model in a comparative study in Mediterranean Europe.

This comparative study focuses on field experience and the need for future teachers to master more than teaching skills. The second paper is “La libertad de elección en el sistema educativo: El caso de España (School choice: the case of Spain) by Patricia Villar which historically traces the regulation and practice of school choice since the Constitution of 1978.

The special feature contains an engaging personal exploration and a call to rethink school bureaucracy by LeRoy Whitehead, a lively response from Benjamin Levin, former Deputy Minister of Education in Manitoba and Ontario, and the author’s reply.

We hope you will find this issue engaging.