

6-1-2011

Editor's Notes and Front Matter

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Recommended Citation

Majhanovich, Suzanne (2011) "Editor's Notes and Front Matter," *Canadian and International Education / Education canadienne et internationale*: Vol. 40: Iss. 1, Article 1.

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Canadian and International Education/Education canadienne et internationale

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Our world can be a cruel and violent one. On the very day that I was going to contact Otilia Chareka to inform her that the CIE would be publishing her paper in the next issue, I learned the tragic news that this promising young scholar had been brutally murdered. I immediately decided to foreground her paper as the first one in the issue and to dedicate *Canadian and International Education*, Volume 40:1 (June/juin 2011) to her memory.

In **Taking the temperature of rights and freedoms: Zimbabwean secondary school students' knowledge about the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights and their support for its provisions**, Otilia Chareka reports on a study she conducted in her native Zimbabwe to assess how much secondary students understood about the the African Banjul Charter, an African human rights document, and the extent to which they supported its provisions. Her study involved a questionnaire with items that related to contents of the Charter to sound out basic knowledge of the provisions, but also including scenarios depicting various situations involving the human rights outlined in the Charter with questions to see whether students could transfer their knowledge of human rights to counteract rights violations in real-life situations. Although students had factual knowledge of the contents of the Charter, they for the most part, were unable to relate that knowledge to support actions that would reflect commitment to human rights. She concluded that most students would not consider challenging those who violate their rights. She recommends that teachers should move beyond presenting human rights at the theoretical level and help their students to envision solutions to human rights violations and to advocate for their own rights and freedoms. Otilia Chareka was someone who worked to promote equity and justice in the world; it is indeed tragic to lose someone who had so much to contribute. I hope that the publication of this study will serve in part as a fitting tribute to her as a scholar and a caring human being.

Notre monde peut être très cruel. J'ai appris l'assassinat sauvage d'Otilia Chareka, une jeune professeure dont l'avenir était très prometteur, le jour où j'allais la contacter pour l'informer que son article allait paraître dans le prochain numéro de la revue *Éducation Canadienne et Internationale*. En apprenant cette nouvelle tragique, j'ai immédiatement décidé de mettre son article en premier plan et de dédier ce numéro 40:1 de l'édition de juin 2011 à sa mémoire.

Dans son article **Mesurer la température des droits et des libertés : connaissances et acceptation de la Charte Africaine des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples chez les étudiants du secondaire au Zimbabwe**, Otilia Chareka fait le compte rendu d'une recherche qu'elle a mené dans son pays natal, le Zimbabwe. Cette recherche évalue la compréhension de la Charte de Banjul chez des étudiants du secondaire, un document de base des Droits de l'Homme en Afrique, et cherche à savoir si ces derniers appliquent vraiment cette charte. Son étude intègre un questionnaire à choix multiples afin d'évaluer les connaissances de base. Il intègre également des scénarios qui montrent des situations réelles en rapport avec les Droits de l'Homme et des questions auxquelles doivent répondre les étudiants afin de montrer s'ils peuvent transférer leurs connaissances et s'opposer à la violation des droits dans des situations réelles. Les résultats des questionnaires montrent que même si les étudiants avaient des connaissances factuelles sur le contenu de la Charte, la plupart d'entre eux était incapable de relier cette connaissance factuelle à des actions qui démontreraient leur engagement envers les Droits de l'Homme. Otilia Chareka en conclut que la plupart des étudiants ne défileraient pas ceux qui vont à l'encontre de ces Droits. Elle recommande aux professeurs de ne pas seulement exposer les Droits de l'Homme de façon théorique dans leurs salles de classe mais plutôt de préparer leurs étudiants à trouver des solutions viables qui combattent la violation des Droits de l'Homme et à prêcher pour leurs propres droits et libertés. Otilia Chareka travaillait pour promouvoir l'équité et la justice dans le monde contemporain. C'est une vraie tragédie de perdre une personne qui avait tellement à contribuer.

J'espère que la publication de cette étude servira à rendre hommage à une femme à la fois brillante et affectueuse.

The second paper in this issue, **Integrating local cultural knowledge as formal and informal education for young African learners: A Ghanaian case study** by George J. Sefa Dei focuses on the resource of Indigenous cultural knowledges such as proverbs and traditional folktales as a vital instrument to inform the educational system and support the development of self-worth and character, social discipline and collective social responsibility. The author contends that this type of informal education is an important socializing element necessary for the education of the complete person. However, he also notes the challenges educators face as they try to integrate local cultural knowledge into a rigid and congested curriculum, especially when confronted with the all-important examinations their students must pass to progress through the system. Considering the message of the first paper that showed how theoretical knowledge alone is not sufficient to imbue in students a real sense of self and human rights, one should ponder what formal education is accomplishing and whether more space should be made for more informal traditional knowledges.

Anthony Ezeife in **The schema-based mathematics study: Enriching mathematics teaching and learning using a culture-sensitive curriculum** argues along the same lines as in the previous article, this time referring to aboriginal students in Canada. He laments the low enrolment and high dropout rates of indigenous students in mathematics and science courses. He suggests that the way these subjects are taught has little relevance to aboriginal students' reality and everyday life, and to counter the problem outlines a study he conducted in a First Nation elementary school where a culturally sensitive mathematics curriculum developed with the assistance of community elders was provided for the students. His study showed that those students who had been taught the culture-sensitive curriculum performed much better than peers who had only experienced the

Le deuxième article de cette édition **L'intégration des connaissances culturelles locales dans l'éducation formelle et informelle des jeunes apprenants africains : une étude de cas au Ghana** de George J. Sefa Dei vise la connaissance des cultures autochtones, tels que les proverbes et les contes. Il propose d'incorporer ces derniers comme instruments de base dans le système éducatif et comme support au développement de la dignité, de la discipline sociale et de la responsabilité sociale collective. L'auteur montre que ce type d'éducation informelle est un élément de socialisation indispensable bien que les défis que rencontrent les éducateurs quand ils cherchent à intégrer la culture locale dans un curriculum rigide et congestionné sont immenses. Les examens que les étudiants doivent passer afin de démontrer leurs progrès dans le système scolaire formel en sont un bon exemple. Si nous considérons le message qui émane du premier article, c'est-à-dire que la connaissance théorique n'est pas suffisante à elle seule afin d'imprégner les étudiants avec un sens réel de l'amour propre et des droits de l'homme, nous devrions nous poser la question sur ce que l'éducation formelle accomplit réellement et s'il ne serait pas plus sage d'ouvrir plus d'espace aux connaissances traditionnelles informelles.

Dans **Une étude de mathématique planifiée : Comment enrichir l'enseignement et l'apprentissage des mathématiques au travers d'un curriculum sensible à la culture**, Anthony N. Ezeife reprend la même idée que l'article antérieur mais avec des étudiants autochtones canadiens. Il lamente la maigre inscription d'étudiants autochtones en mathématiques et en sciences, ainsi que le taux élevé de désertion. Il se risque à dire que la façon dont sont enseignées ces matières n'est pas pertinente du tout avec la vie quotidienne des étudiants autochtones. Afin de répondre à ce problème, il expose brièvement une étude qu'il a menée dans une école élémentaire des Premières Nations où il a développé un curriculum sensible à la culture avec l'aide des anciens de la communauté. Son étude montre clairement que les étudiants qui ont étudié avec le

regular provincial curriculum. Like Dei, arguing for the importance of cultural local knowledge in African communities, Ezeife too maintains that cultural practices, ideas and beliefs incorporated into classroom practices that would connect school curriculum to the community are key to a fulfilling and relevant education.

AbdelHady ElNagar and Eva Krugly-Smolka in **Modernization of Education in Egypt: The Liberal Movement Towards Dewey's Ideas** also argue the ineffectiveness of rigid rote-based education and favour instead progressive education such as Dewey advocated. The paper provides a historical perspective of the gradual acceptance in Egypt of Dewey's educational ideas and relates how Al-Qabbani, a progressive Egyptian Minister of Education, promoted Dewey's theories for education and led to a modernization of the educational system in Egypt.

Although in North America, progressive education of the type advocated by Dewey has been a possibility and certainly is evident in many schools, a growing pressure for accountability as addressed through scores on standardized tests has become more the norm. As seen in the Ezeife article, standard test-driven curriculum that does not recognize the importance of local communities and customs has not been particularly successful with aboriginal students. It has also caused serious problems for new Canadian students, particularly those classified as English Language Learners. Han Han and Liying Cheng in **Tracking the Success of English Language Learners within the Context of the Ontario Secondary school Literacy Test** report on their 3-year study that closely documented linguistic, cognitive and socio-cultural learning experiences of eight secondary English Language Learners. They found that the prospect of taking the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test was daunting for ELLs, created a major challenge to their school success and affected their educational goals. The authors argue that administrators and teachers in schools with ELLs need to recognize the cultural and communicative frustration these students face and need to address the problems with strong effective

curriculum sensible à la culture ont obtenu de bien meilleurs résultats que ceux qui ont suivi le curriculum officiel de la province. Tout comme Dei qui parle en faveur de la connaissance locale des communautés africaines, Ezeife soutient l'idée que connecter les pratiques culturelles, les idées et les croyances locales avec les pratiques curriculaires, représente la clef d'une éducation épanouissante et significative.

AbdelHady ElNagar et Eva Krugly-Smolka exposent également l'inefficacité de l'éducation rigide et traditionnelle dans **Modernisation de l'éducation en Égypte: l'intégration des idées de Dewey du mouvement libéral** et favorisent plutôt une éducation basée sur les idées de Dewey. Cet article offre une perspective historique de l'évolution du processus d'acceptation des idées éducatives de Dewey en Égypte et explique comment Al-Qabbani, un Ministre d'Éducation égyptien progressiste, a réussi à promouvoir les théories éducatives de Dewey afin de moderniser le système éducatif de son pays.

Bien qu'en Amérique du Nord l'éducation progressive comme celle de Dewey est en plein essor dans beaucoup d'écoles, il existe une influence certaine des mécanismes de transparence qui imposent des tests standards. Comme l'exprime l'article de Ezeife, les curricula basés sur des tests standards qui ne reconnaissent pas l'importance des coutumes des communautés locales n'ont pas été très efficaces avec les étudiants autochtones. Ces curricula ont également posé beaucoup de problèmes avec les étudiants étiquetés comme étant des Apprenants d'Anglais Langue Seconde (AALS). Han Han et Liying Cheng, dans leur article intitulé **Comprendre le succès des allophones d'anglais langue seconde dans le contexte du Test Provincial de Compétences Linguistiques de l'école secondaire en Ontario** recensent une étude de trois ans qui fait le compte rendu de l'apprentissage linguistique, cognitif et socio-culturel de huit AALS au secondaire. Les auteurs montrent que la perspective de devoir passer le Test Provincial des Compétences Linguistiques est tout à fait intimidante pour les AALS, que le test crée un défi majeur pour le succès des écoles et qu'il affecte les objectifs éducatifs de ces dernières. Les auteurs proposent aux administrateurs et aux professeurs des écoles de reconnaître la

ESL programs to improve ELLs' academic English competence. Supportive learning communities in the secondary system are needed to support ELLs in their quest for academic success.

The final paper, **Nouvelle Régulation de l'éducation et transformation du travail enseignant: une analyse des expériences des enseignants de Vancouver, Toronto et Montréal** by Madeleine Tchimou looks at educational policy regulations in three Canadian provinces, developed to address demands for accountability and concerned with standardized testing, but also related to the neo-liberal agenda that imposes market values on educational endeavours and promotes policies that champion decentralization, privatization, partnerships among others. She is particularly concerned with the way the neo-liberal policies affect the work of teachers and her study involved interviews with 200 teachers from three provinces in the cities of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. Teachers in the three cities had similar reactions to the effects of the policies on themselves and their students. They all found that class sizes had grown and that in addition to the attention on raising test scores and preparing students for the tests had increased their workload considerably. Although most agreed that it was important for students to show success on such instruments as the standardized tests, most regretted the time devoted to preparation for the tests and consequently time lost for other subjects. Similar to the findings of the Han/Cheng article, teachers were concerned about the stress on ELLs as a result of the standardized literacy tests. Tchimou concludes that the new policies require new competencies in teachers as well as a new way to think about their practices, their profession and their professional identity.

The six papers in this issue in one sense address very different educational concerns including awareness and commitment to human rights and freedoms; the importance

frustration culturelle et communicative que ces étudiants doivent affronter et de devancer ces problèmes en créant des programmes académiques d'anglais langue seconde spécialement conçus pour AALS. Des communautés d'apprentissage de soutien sont donc indispensables dans les écoles secondaires pour assurer le succès des AALS.

Le dernier article, **Nouvelle régulation de l'éducation et transformation du travail enseignant: une analyse des expériences des enseignants de Vancouver, Toronto et Montréal** de Madeleine Tchimou vise les politiques de régulation scolaire de trois provinces canadiennes qui ont été développées afin de répondre aux demandes de transparence et de tests standardisés. Ces politiques vivent également en relation étroite avec l'agenda néo libéral qui impose une logique de marché à l'entreprise éducative et cherchent à promouvoir entre autres la décentralisation, la privatisation et les partenariats. L'auteur cherche surtout à comprendre comment ces politiques néo libérales affectent le travail des professeurs, raison pour laquelle elle a interviewé 200 professeurs issus de Montréal, Toronto et Vancouver. Les professeurs de ces trois villes ont tous eu des réactions semblables quant aux effets engendrés par ces politiques sur eux-mêmes et sur leurs élèves. Ils ont tous trouvé que la moyenne d'élèves par classe a augmenté et que leur quantité de travail s'est nettement accrue puisqu'ils doivent préparer leurs élèves à ces tests. Bien que la plupart d'entre eux pensent qu'il est indispensable que leurs élèves obtiennent de bons résultats aux tests standards afin d'assurer leur réussite scolaire, ils pensent également que le temps dévoué à la préparation de ces tests va en détriment du temps consacré à d'autres sujets. Comme dans l'article de Han et Cheng, les professeurs sont inquiets quant au stress que provoquent les tests standards de compétences linguistiques chez les AALS. Tchimou conclut que les nouvelles politiques exigent de nouvelles compétences chez les professeurs et une nouvelle façon de penser à leurs pratiques d'enseignement, à leur profession et à leur identité professionnelle.

Les six articles de cette édition traitent tous des questions éducatives bien différentes : conscience et engagement envers les droits et libertés des peuples; importance de la

of local knowledges and culture in educating children, be they in Africa or in First Nation schools; the effect of Dewey's progressive education in modernizing the Egyptian educational system; the negative effect of standardized literacy test on English Language learners and how to mitigate the problems; and finally how the "new order" in education with its neo-liberal agenda has begun to change the way teachers exercise their profession and construct their professional identity. Still the message that flows through all papers highlights the conflict between fact and test-driven education as opposed to education that is important and meaningful for humanity, education that will be relevant to the learners, and will assist them in becoming full members of their community and citizens of the world

Suzanne Majhanovich,
Editor

culture et des connaissances locales dans l'éducation des enfants, en Afrique et au Canada ; effets de l'éducation progressive de Dewey en vue de moderniser le système éducatif égyptien ; effets des tests standardisés de compétences linguistiques chez les Apprenants d'Anglais Langue Seconde et comment mitiger le problème ; et enfin, changement de la profession de professeur et de leur identité professionnelle sous l'influence du « nouvel ordre » éducatif de l'agenda néo libéral. Même si ces questions sont toutes différentes, il existe un fil conducteur qui montre clairement qu'il existe un conflit de plus en plus latent entre une éducation qui cherche la transparence par le biais des tests standards et une éducation plus significative pour l'humanité, une éducation plus utile pour les apprenants qui les aide à devenir non seulement membres à part entière dans leur communauté d'origine mais aussi citoyens du monde.

Suzanne Majhanovich
Rédactrice

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Subscriptions, Canadian dollars,
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Remembering Otilia Chareka
by Alan Sears & Rebekah Sears



Otilia Chareka burst into our family's life in the summer of 1993. We returned to Fredericton from two years in Vancouver to find Otilia was waiting and eager to begin the next phase of her life in Canada. She had just completed an undergraduate certificate at UNB and had been accepted to the M.Ed program. She promptly informed Alan that she had been told about him and that he was going to be her supervisor. Don't misunderstand; Otilia wasn't presumptuous. Like most international students she was unflinchingly polite with her teachers. She did have a plan, however, and was not shy about sharing it.

Over the next 18 years Otilia became an important part of our lives. She was much more than a student of Alan's, she soon became a friend of the whole family. Otilia called Alan her 'academic dad' and found that she shared a deep and abiding interest in human rights, social justice, and Africa with Rebekah who became her 'academic sister.'

Recently a long obituary for Otilia appeared in the *Globe and Mail* and it mentioned Alan's supervision of her masters and doctoral work. A colleague from Ottawa read it and wrote to express condolence in the loss of such a talented protégé. Alan replied that in his relationship with Otilia he was never sure who was whose protégé. Otilia entered our lives as a student but she was also our teacher and mentor in many ways. We would like to highlight a few of those.

First, she pushed Alan's academic work in significantly new directions. The initial plan was that for her PhD dissertation Otilia would carve out a portion of a larger project already underway. The direction Otilia took was not one our research team had anticipated. We had funding to examine how people understand key concepts related to democracy. Otilia was interested in finding out if immigrants to Canada – specifically immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa – might understand key elements of democracy differently from native born

Canadians. Her work opened ours to new areas of exploration including multicultural and anti-racist education. Otilia was a good scholar and a great collaborator who consistently pushed those around her to do better work.

Rebekah spent a post-university year working in Rwanda and this really cemented her bond with Otilia. Otilia was on the email list of family and closest friends with whom Rebekah shared moments of sadness, challenge, and joy. Her work centred on fostering healing and reconciliation following the genocide and Otilia could always be counted on to provide comfort, sage advice, and encouraging words when the pain and sorrow associated with that work seemed overwhelming.

The stories that brought them closest together, however, were the funny ones when Rebekah shared some of her surprise and squeamishness over African cultural and culinary practices that were new to her. Many Canadian friends shared Rebekah's amusement and reticence but Otilia was jealous. Rebekah's stories made Otilia homesick and her Canadian friend's cultural stumbles provoked gales of laughter and good will.

Most importantly, Otilia taught us much about what it means to live well. The Globe and Mail obituary was very good but it did get one thing wrong. The headline read, 'She Thought She Had Beaten the Odds.' Otilia did not just think she had beaten the odds; she did beat them over and over again.

As a young girl she lay on the floor of her primary school in Zimbabwe while the battling armies in a civil war fired at each other through the windows. As a teenager she worked to pay her own school fees because her family's money was being used to educate the boys. When her teaching credentials were not recognized in Canada she took a job as a hotel maid to pay her tuition and earn an undergraduate diploma and a masters degree. When her brother died in a terrible bus accident and members of her family were struck down with HIV/Aids, she took on significant overloads of sessional teaching to send money home to help those left behind.

We shared Christian faith with Otilia. Ours was born and nurtured in the secure and comfortable confines of a prosperous and safe North American middleclass life. Hers was tested by fire on so many occasions and yet she remained both hopeful and other focused. She did not see barriers but challenges; she did not wallow in self-pity but looked outward to help others. Otilia's example pushed us to think more deeply about how to more consistently live out the principles and precepts of our faith in difficult circumstances – in the messiness of life. We are deeply grateful to have known her.