

# **INTRODUCTION TO *POSTCOLONIAL DIRECTIONS IN EDUCATION*, Vol. 3 No. 1.**

From the co-editors **Anne Hickling-Hudson, Peter Mayo and Milosh Raykov**

The Editorial team of the *Postcolonial Directions in Education* (PDE) online journal welcomes this special issue, Vol. 3 No. 1, guest-edited by Dr. Nisha Thapliyal of the University of Newcastle, Australia. The special issue explores a crucial concern for education: the relationship between learning, knowledge and collective action for social transformation. It is all the more important for scholars of education to research and write about this, given today's context of a sustained neo-liberal current in which individualism and privatisation are being promoted above notions of social responsibility for the collective good.

The focus of the Special Issue emerged from a bilingual panel presentation at the 2013 conference of the World Council of Comparative and International Education Societies (WCCES) in Buenos Aires, Argentina. One of the editors of the PDE journal, having attended the panel entitled "Social mobilisations for education in Brazil, USA and India: A dialogue between activists and academics", held discussions afterwards with panel members about the possibility of developing this work as a special collection in the journal. Contributors to this collection, organised by Dr. Thapliyal, explore the relationship between knowledge and activism in diverse contexts ranging from those of the MST, a Brazilian rural social movement that has opposed neoliberal policies for rural education and development, to emerging social mobilisations for public education in India, to 'resistance' pedagogy in a North American post-graduate university classroom. The authors also discuss how knowledge for transformation characterised the work of three brilliant public intellectuals of Africa and the

Caribbean, as well as collective deliberations on the role of the 'socially responsible university' at a recent conference on higher education organised and held in Cuba.

Readers will notice that an unusual feature of this issue of the PDE journal is the translations of abstracts into Portuguese. Normally, the journal invites authors to provide an abstract in their own language if they speak a language other than English. The rationale for providing Portuguese translations at the end of the journal stems from a desire to make this issue of the journal accessible in essence to our Brazilian activist colleagues from the MST. The MST is a movement of poor and landless people who have constructed their own educational philosophy and practices of critical and liberatory education. In doing so, they have challenged the hierarchies of knowledge which support hegemonic capitalist education within Latin America specifically 'schooled', academic or 'expert' knowledge. However, their limited resources continue to seriously constrain access to similar debates beyond the Portuguese- and Spanish- speaking world. This was a point that was emphasised by the MST activists who contributed to the WCCES panel and this Special Journal Issue. The journal therefore has made a gesture of solidarity towards continuing the bilingualism of the WCCES panel presentation that inspired this PDE issue, and that does so much to facilitate cross-cultural exchange. We have provided summaries in Portuguese for all the articles, with a slightly longer summary for the pedagogical reflection by Klees that engages with questions about how to teach about education and development – subjects of central interest to MST activists. In this way, we hope that Brazilian readers will be able to engage with all the articles, thanks to the combination of open-access and Portuguese translations.

We extend our thanks to those who contributed to this significant special issue of *Postcolonial Directions in Education*, and particularly to Dr. Thapliyal for her key role as guest editor. We invite readers to enjoy it.