

A Decade of Global Education Review: Commemorating the 10th Anniversary

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Anniversaries are often taken as an opportunity to reflect on the past. It's a chance to ponder on the accomplishments one has achieved. That is true for the 10th anniversary of Mercy University's *Global Education Review* (GER). Which ideas and wishes that had led to the development of a journal on educational issues became a reality? What were the challenges and achievements, and what does the journal mean for us, the faculty in Mercy University's School of Education (SoE)? And, of course, it is also a time to look ahead. Where will our journal's journey lead us, and what will the future look like?

Ten Years - already? But also: really? That the journal still exists after ten years is something to be proud of. When GER started, it wasn't clear what the future of a journal, which had been until this point, not much more than an idea, would look like and if it would exist for ten years (or maybe even five). Or, as Mel Wermuth, the founding editor, put it nicely: "We began with no clear idea of what to publish, no name for the journal, and no knowledge of how to publish online. Yet, began we did. But begin what?" Nevertheless, GER is still here!

The idea for a university-own (or back then, college-own) journal was introduced to the faculty by Al Posamentier, the School of

Education's dean at that time. He also had a vision of why such a journal might be worthwhile and beneficial for the SoE faculty. From the beginning, the idea was to create an international journal to promote the exchange of international ideas and encourage collaborations. The journal aimed to link "academics with similar interests, yet from different countries, and with a variety of cultural and political backgrounds" (Posamentier, 2014, p.1). Many of us back then felt and still feel today that such international exchanges, the comparison of differences and similarities in our educational systems, and looking at how other countries and cultures think about educational issues are indeed beneficial. While educational issues always need to be seen in local contexts and traditions, certain issues have become worldwide phenomena. Still, they often have different meanings in various countries; for example, kindergarten or inclusion can mean very different things depending on the country in which one works. Furthermore, educational systems try to find different or similar approaches to solve similar educational problems. Such comparisons, though, are thought-provoking. As the late Bruce S. Cooper, who served on the advisory board and introduced the first issue, wrote in 2014: "Looking at problems, issues, and solutions in

education becomes more interesting and useful when we compare what scholars and practitioners in different countries and cultures have found” (Cooper, 2014, p. 3). Collaboration and simply listening carefully to how scholars with different lived experiences think about educational issues leads to critically examining terms or issues we take for granted in our local contexts.

While the goal was to exchange ideas and provide an open-access platform to publish research findings, at the same time the journal also aimed, or in the beginning, maybe only hoped, to encourage “new international cooperations between and among academics around the world can not only lead to a myriad of unanticipated research projects, but could also result in some creative new grant applications, which could generate interesting educational findings, leading to innovative educational projects” (Posamentier, 2014, p. 1/2). That's why the new journal interested many of us: to find colleagues worldwide and work with them on projects, small or big.

GER had always been envisioned as a broad and open educational journal. There was no specific focus, such as, for example, early childhood education; the journal wanted to cover a wide variety of topics and give voice to scholars from all around the world. Even if such possible threads such as the worldwide comparison of specific topics, the discussion of ideologies/philosophies of education, or the comparison of student-school outcomes or student assessment were outlined by Bruce S. Cooper in his introductory editorial (Cooper, 2014), it wasn't clear if that would be the direction GER would follow. However, if we look back at issues in the last ten years, quite a bit of what back then were just ideas, has become reality. The journal's focus is indeed global, and many of the issues have been interdisciplinary,

international, or border-crossing. Authors from all around the world—including countries such as South Africa, India, and El Salvador, to name only a few—have published in GER.

Furthermore, the topics of the special issues often resulted from international collaborations or have led to further ones. Some topics have been covered more than others, though. The most common themes are Early Childhood Education (6 issues), Literacy/Bilingualism (4 issues), Special Education-related topics (3 issues), Refugee Education (3 issues), and STEM-related topics (2 issues). Those topics don't come as a surprise. First, they are aligned with Mercy University's mission as a Hispanic serving institution and the SoE's mission of preparing effective teachers and educators. We aim to empower future teachers, particularly those often underrepresented, to support diverse students to succeed in their learning and community environments. Second, these themes result from the scholarly interests of the SoE's faculty in the departments of Early Childhood & Childhood Education, Literacy and Multilingual Studies, Special Education, and the Mercy Center for STEM Education. Al Posamentier and Mel Wermuth envisioned GER as successful and sustainable only if the faculty carried it. In addition, such a journal must allow the faculty to explore ideas through new collaborations. Thus, the SoE faculty has served not only as the journal's editors, but also—and many of us more than once—as the special issue's editors. GER Volume 2 (4) was the first that wasn't edited by SoE faculty, and even today, faculty regularly serve as editors. For the faculty, GER has always been a means to follow their specific interests, highlight their research, work on something they are interested in, or explore new ideas, something unknown, without always knowing where it would lead us.

Establishing the journal and working as special issue editors can be challenging. Sudha Ramaswamy, who served together with Kathy-Anne Jordan as co-editors for GER's inaugural issue on inclusion, recalls the challenge of establishing the credibility and reputation of the journal within the academic community and how difficult it was to convince reputable scholars to submit their work to a new journal that lacked a track record. Attracting high-quality submissions and maintaining the rigor of the journal's peer review process were challenges throughout the last ten years, even if we became better with it. Serving as issue editors, however, has been professionally enriching and fruitful, as it often forced us to deepen our knowledge and expertise, as well as an enjoyable experience. Or, as Sudha, who served as an editor a second time, puts it: "It was a joyful and unique experience sharing this opportunity with my sister, Dr. Priya Ramaswamy, who works in the field of Speech and Language Pathology" (Ramaswamy, 2023). Without the SoE faculty, GER would never have reached its 10th anniversary, as Mel points out while looking back on the last ten years. "But even with the best distribution, open-access journals that don't charge authors a fee for publication, and with no institutional support, don't survive for ten years without a committed editorial team" (Wermuth, 2023, p. 2). I would also like to add: only because of the committed faculty, as many in the SoE have and continue to support GER's work.

Thus, it is no surprise that the anniversary issue is comprised of entries written by the SoE faculty. In many ways, the collected articles represent our work as editors, scholars, and faculty members at Mercy University, and they also show once more how the ideas that shaped the new journal are still alive and shape our work.

Roseanne Vallice Levy's "Trying to Fit a Square Peg into a Round Hole: Being Indian-American in the USA" in many ways embodies GER's initial vision of exchanging ideas to promote critical thinking. In her article, Roseanne reflects on her path as the oldest child of Indian immigrants as an outsider in kindergarten who didn't fit into a certain box, "a box which held standards and expectations that had little to no regard for race, ethnicity, and culture" (Levy, 2023, p. 11) to become a professor who has found her voice and role. Her mix of personal reflection and research findings is a powerful reminder of how much we take for granted in our daily work as educators. How often do we not realize and oversee what is essential for young children (or our students at Mercy)? Listening to how people with different lived experiences think about education to think critically about our assumptions was one of the main ideas for starting the journal. Roseanne's article shows why this is still valuable today.

Eric Martone explores in "Supporting Good Habits: The Rockefellers, the Sisters of Mercy, and Higher Education in New York State" the complex relationship between the Rockefellers and the Sisters of Mercy. It is a fascinating insight into the intertwined history of the Sisters of Mercy and the Rockefellers in Tarrytown, centering around the famous estate Kykuit, and the founding of Mercy College (now Mercy University). Without the Rockefellers' aid, Mercy wouldn't have been able to thrive and evolve into the multi-campus, co-educational, and secular institution it is today—including its own journal on educational issues. That Eric chose to reflect on this neglected aspect of Rockefeller's philanthropy in their home state of New York doesn't come as a surprise. Eric, together with his colleague, Michael Perrota, from Mercy University's School of Liberal Arts, is the historian of Mercy University's past. In

2013—the same year as GER started—the two published *Mercy College: Yesterday and Today*. That he now looks back at Mercy's past shows that many of us not only work for Mercy University, but deeply care about its mission and our students.

As mentioned, GER always served as a means for our faculty to highlight their work. “Developing and Sustaining Elementary STEM Teacher Leadership Identities” by Kristen Napolitano et al. does precisely that, as it highlights the work of the Mercy Center for STEM education. One of the significant endeavors of the center is the Fellowship program that strengthens K-12 STEM teacher leadership in local, high-need schools to address the fact that still too many elementary students are not always exposed to STEM subjects and miss out on opportunities to access and enjoy the hands-on, inquiry-driven activities. The article describes how the fellowship supports elementary teachers in evolving as STEM leaders, taking on STEM identities, growing as STEM advocates, and finally being recognized by others as STEM teacher leaders. It again highlights how the SoE's faculty values collaboration, not only in the international context, but also within local communities.

Elena Nitecki, in her book review of *Finding Froebel – The Man Who Invented Kindergarten* by Helge Wasmuth, Ulf Sauerbrey, and Michael Winkler, demonstrates the importance of collaborations, working and creating together, and exploring ideas and concepts together. Moreover, her review highlights how such work impacts our daily work as educators. Elena and I first served as editors of a double-issue in 2016 and experienced how enriching it can be working as a GER editor. When Mel asked us to become editors, we only had a vague idea of an issue of interest and concern to us, and we shared

similar ideas about early childhood education. However, it was only an idea, and we didn't know where it would lead us. Elena reminds us in her piece that the willingness to explore new ideas can lead us to many opportunities, both for our thinking about education and the manifold international collaborations resulting from our work as editors for GER.

So, what will the next ten years bring? What will the future look like? We don't know, as the educational landscape, as well as scholarly publishing, is rapidly changing. One just needs to think of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the educational system and the way we deliver instruction, or the inexorable advance of Artificial Intelligence that is changing how we create and deliver knowledge and what it means to learn and be a teacher. Will scholarly journals become obsolete or maybe even more important than ever?

As Mel has pointed out in his reflection on the first ten years, a journal such as GER depends on the people's commitment, and to keep it alive, faculty need time and resources. GER will continue to be open to different ideas. However, we are also planning to expand the reach and influence of GER by co-sponsoring and organizing academic events that coincide with its themed issues, as we have already done in the past to highlight the double-issue of “Finding Froebel: National and Cross-National Pedagogical Paths in Froebelian Early Childhood Education.” Maybe such endeavors, the mix of scholarly publication and webinars, might be the more interesting future.

Will there be ten more years? Again, no one knows. When GER started, no one really expected the journal to be alive ten years later, as Mel points out in looking back at the beginning. “It is a source of pride to be asked, which is pleasant, but it is surprising to me that

this journal survived for these past ten years, because when it began, without any institutional support, I had no idea what it was going to be about.” If the GER editorial team can write something similar in 2033, we will again be a source of pride.

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