Editorial

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It is with great pleasure that we present this special issue of *JOGLTEP* as guest editors. To many, higher education today, at a moment when communications technology promises participation on a genuinely unprecedented scale, has come to seem an ideal, open and even playing field. But educators who are aware of the increasingly one-way traffic of ideas, culture, commodities, and power across countries, cultures, and contexts enabled by these technologies are taking notice of the growing divisions and difficulties that work to prevent meaningful knowledge-sharing and professional collaboration, especially internationally. Teachers in the global peripheries not only lack access to scholarship at the global centers; many of them also do not have the reason or incentive to join the conversations that we at the center consider "ahead" of the curve. They have their own concerns, priorities, and perspectives.

Fortunately, with the advent of massive open online courses – and especially the often massively poor educational ideas in the mainstream discourse about MOOCs as the salvation of cross-border higher education -- educators across contexts today are having more conversations on cross-border higher education than ever before. This issue of *JOGLTEP* reflects the best of that conversation, a conversation whose participants are aware that globalization is less shared and seamless and more problematic than advocates of global "flatness" (in the now famous phrasing of journalist Thomas Friedman) often suggest. Indeed, the contributors to this issue are interested in building more truly collaborative and interactive forms of globalized higher education, facilitated in positive ways by emerging technologies. The collection of essays, then, critically engages the implications of adopting MOOCs uncritically, exploring the potentials and opportunities that MOOCs of various types offer and proposing ways of using them in the service of pedagogically and socially meaningful ends.

The authors who have contributed to this issue come from around the world. Their works also present a truly diverse set of perspectives about MOOCs and their broader educational and cross-contextual implications. None of the articles or narratives present MOOCs as a magical solution to any crisis in education, and none of them paint them as the sole outcome of the greed or dishonesty of those who have the power and money to drive the MOOC "revolution." What you will see in this collection is a set of very thought-provoking observations, reflections, analyses, and discussions based on experience or scholarship about MOOCs and about broader issues pertaining to the development of this phenomenon.

Most articles focus on issues of teaching and learning in the local contexts in which the authors work and live, and some discuss issues of cross-contextual

significance. They have touched upon geopolitical, cultural, ethical, and labor issues both within and across borders. Some ask and explore significant policy questions from the perspective of academic institutions as well as scholars and teachers, focusing on socio-cultural, technological, pedagogical, and other issues regarding the design and implementation of MOOCs. Others focus on the global markets for education, addressing issues that arise when the current models of international higher education are dramatically "disrupted" by new models based on MOOCs. The authors write with an understanding that the local and global issues are intertwined in complex ways. Together, they cover theoretical, conceptual, and methodological issues, with some adopting empirical research methods to produce their own work.

Maha Bali, a thoughtful and very well-informed colleague from Egypt, has kindly agreed to prepare a reflection on the other pieces, highlighting some of the issues that stood out to her in the articles. An active member of an emerging community of educators across borders and someone who regularly writes about technologies, pedagogies, and other issues of cross-border higher education, Maha has provided both an overview and reflections of the articles. Besides seven standard journal articles, we have also included two narratives through which two educators share their personal experiences of online education, one of them as a father and the other as a non-traditional student and an outsider.

The articles, narratives, and the observation represent a variety of ways in which MOOCs are creating opportunities for research and scholarship, identifying some very specific and nuanced issues for further research and discussion. They highlight educational prospects that MOOCs provide for cross-border education, from the perspectives of students, teachers, and institutions. They touch upon issues of collaboration, exchange, influence, benefits, and compromise. And they also discuss how institutions and societies could adopt and adapt the platforms, pedagogies, curricular resources, and practices of educational exchange through mainstream and non-mainstream MOOCs.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank our reviewers for their time and expertise. We are also grateful for the support provided by the founding editors of the journal, Dr. Limbu and Dr. Gurung. And we are grateful to the writers who cooperated with us and made the review process convenient for us by responding in a timely manner.

As you will see from the diversity of backgrounds of contributing authors, this special issue is "special" not so much because of a focus on the issue (and not at all because of a focus on a shared set of perspectives). To accentuate the diversity of perspectives coming from many different contexts, we have decided to be flexible about the style and guidelines in the areas of spelling, mechanics, and citation. We have tried to make the materials accessible for a diverse audience as best as we could.

Thank you for reading this wonderful scholarly conversation, and we hope to hear your responses and comments (at the emails below).

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About the Editors

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