Editorial Introduction

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In this first issue of the second volume of the journal, the themes that are treated directly relate to the schooling and social development rights of cultural or ability minorities whose experiences in Canadian and international locations of education need and deserve more attention and understanding. It is generally assumed that education leads either to societal reproduction where the structure of dominant social classes and related categories of life are maintained through the instructional and learning realities that take place in all levels of schooling. Not similar to that is the possibility of educating for social transformation where both the objectives and outcomes of education are expected to achieve some politico-cultural enfranchisement and socio-economic well-being for all. More often than otherwise, these important relationships between learners and spaces of schooling are also colored by the experiences of certain students who may be different, in either their linguistic, cultural, ethnic or ability perspectives, from the so-called mainstream groups whose structural positions and possible functionalities might correspond more effectively with the policies and the programs of the education system. And for critical pedagogues and researchers, that should raise such important questions as to what extent does the schooling systems understand and respond to the histories and the actual needs of those who are different?

As importantly, the experiences of these learners should be analyzed, not only from the platform of the system's understanding and responses, but as well, from the agency-driven actions of the students themselves who are never passive consumers of the learning dispensation, but would actively come with their own projects and expectations, and who will undoubtedly analyze their surroundings and accordingly respond in the best ways they can, which for many, may determine levels of success or even survival in the system. It is with respect to some of these ideas and concerns that the three articles in this issue focus on such topics as the experiences of racialized students in higher education, the use of cultural instruments as one component of the learning space, and the need to create inclusive spaces of education for disabled students who may have been hitherto segregated in less endowed platforms of learning that would not be conducive to effective social development.

In the first article, 'Making it in the Canadian university system: an exploration of the experiences, motivations, and perceptions of a sample of high-achieving Black Canadian university students', Kevin Gosine discusses his findings from a qualitative study that examined the postsecondary schooling experiences, motivations, and perceptions of 16 high-achieving Black university students who are now studying, or were until recently studying in different 'high-profile' programs in Canadian universities. In analyzing his

data, Gosine notes how these students, while expectedly motivated to achieve academic success for the financial and enhanced personal profile rewards it could bring, many were also motivated by a desire to debunk race-based stereotypes that would generally label the communities of these learners as lacking either the capacities and/or the agency to successfully complete elite programs in major research universities in Canada and possibly elsewhere. As such, these learners saw more in their programs than just the individual achievements they could undertake; for many, it was also one way of responding to, and by structural extension, improving the general situation of their communities.

In the second article, 'Steelpan', Caribbean identity and culturally relevant adult programs', Jean Walrond analyzes the steelpan, a Caribbean percussion instrument created out, as she writes, of resistance and rebellion, and which was introduced to Edmonton (Canada) in the 1960s. As time went by, though, students of Caribbean heritage have started using it to play for the school's "cultural days", with the intention of sharing their cultural experiences with others. In this essay, Walrond discusses some of these students' experiences. In addition, she speaks about the importance of the steelplan and how it adds a lot, not only to the social recognition of the lives of the Caribbean, but as well to the overall well-being development of these Canadians, and the case will be more so when the use of the instrument is incorporated into relevant adult education programs. This is based on the reality that educational programs in Canada have not effectively responded to the needs of Caribbean Canadians; to create learning programs that are trustworthy, therefore, we need to have some cultural grounding in especially the teaching of adult learners.

In the third article, 'From segregation to equalization: the polish perspective on educating children with intellectual disabilities', Małgorzata Gil, discusses how historically, the educational segregation of children with disabilities was the norm in Poland. In the past years, though, a change seems to have taken place with the state recognizing and accepting the importance of the principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary learning opportunities. As Gil notes, this is very important, for it should be incumbent upon the state to safeguard the equal educational rights of disabled students. And while there might have been some improvements, the author notes how the system continually disadvantages these special needs students, and the need to correct those situations. Beyond the three articles, there is a book review, *Higher Education in postcolonial Africa: paradigms of development, decline and dilemmas* (2007), edited M.O. Afolayan, which is reviewed by Michael Kariwo.