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## Letter from the Editor

Every time I ponder the content for a foreword of an issue, I am amazed at how themes of the articles seem to interconnect. Although our *Call for Papers* is not limiting specific themes, I find connections among the submitted articles. It is not different with this, our 20<sup>th</sup> Volume, Issue 1. Since the inception of the International Forum of Teaching and Study, we have encouraged dialogue among students, practitioners, scholars, and administrators in the broad field of education. Our forum is open and free to everyone. IFOTS brings you together to grasp the vast diversity of realities in our respective education settings. In the research and essays from colleagues in over 20 countries over the years, we have come to recognize commonalities.

Once again, in what you are about to read you will find connections at the intersection of what our field is all about: the molding and training *and* the leading forth of all by means of teaching and learning. Rooted in the etymology of the root word of our profession: *educaré* and *educere*, we do both. Not only do we instruct to transfer knowledge and skills; we encourage the development of talents of students and support moral and informed decision-making. Or we ought to... In this issue, you will read about our praxes in varying contexts and spaces; and you may examine and understand the differences and commonalities present across our respective *cultures*.

You will read about improving faculty strength due to their sense of belonging within a learning community and the impact on students. From the perspective of Mexican migrant workers, you will understand the significance of the lifelong learning framework that promotes self-directed learning and a pedagogy of self-empowerment. Next, you read about why a self-directed, introspective process linked with dialogue creates mutuality within society. Bringing these aspects of belonging, self-empowerment, and transformative learning together, you see these aspects connecting to the theme of human education, which is the third article's point. Moving on, we are reminded of the impact of rapidly changing technology and our often-blind reliance on it in education.

We are called to take a critical look at Chatbots in education and to become a bit more aware of the importance of accuracy for AI in our life, as much as the responsibility to maintain solid human interaction in teaching and learning. That is another point at our intersection. Next is a study about writing as a means for effective communication across languages, as is the case with English as a Foreign Language Learning (EFL). It has us question traditional instructional methods versus more liberal, student-centered approaches. If communication is essential to create this better self and better world, then diving more deeply into nuances of our respective language sure is important. That is another connector to arrive at our intersection among all themes.

And finally, we introduce *From my Perspective*, a section featuring reflections from the field. You will read about the need for Black leadership and leadership development for inclusivity in higher education by means of mentoring. In this section, we also are called to consider the predatorial practices from financial college loan operators to restore the good faith of students seeking upward mobility and a better quality of life through higher education.

**And there you have it:** at the inter-connection of seemingly disparate *themes*, we have found common ground of values, practices, missions, and goals of educating ... *by, for, and with* all stakeholders in our field.

**Dr. Gabriele Strohschen**

Professor Emerita, DePaul University

**For Further Consideration**

Goulah, J. (2020) Human Education: Daisaku Ikeda's Philosophy and Practice of Ningen Kyōik.

*University of Chicago Press Journals*, 17(1), 153-170. <https://doi.org/10.1086/708362>

Stanage, S.M. (1986). "Unrestraining" Liberty: Adult Education and the Empowerment of Persons. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 36(3), 123-129.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6aeqXaXOSg>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9Z83I\\_g4Hw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9Z83I_g4Hw)

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