

# Editorial Introduction

BY JESPER GARSDAL

This issue of the Futures of Education, Culture & Nature – Learning to Become journal is devoted to exploring the theme of "Reimagining Interdependence." Further, reflecting recent updates in the journal's direction, this issue also introduces a new section, "Perspectives and Explorations," a section intended to complement the various thematic foci of the journal's issues with perspectives that might lie outside the immediate scope of the themes in the issues of the journal.

The theme 'Reimagining Interdependence' invites a rethinking of the intricate connections between humans, nature, and the various systems we inhabit. Drawing inspiration from diverse perspectives, the contributions related to this theme emphasize the need for a holistic approach to education that integrates ecological sustainability, cultural richness, and social well-being, reflecting the interconnectedness of all aspects of life on Earth without being blind to the challenges such interconnectedness and interdependence might pose.

His Excellency, HE Thakur S. Powdyel, is a former Minister of Education in Bhutan, a globally renowned educational thinker, recipient of the International Gusi Peace Prize and the Global Education Award, and the keynote speaker at the FECUN 2023 online conference 'Reimagining Interdependence.' Powdyel, however, is also the architect behind Bhutan's Green School program, and he presents in his essay, titled "Bhutan's Unique Development Paradigm: The Green School Model of Restorative Learning," the vision of the Green Schools as deeply embedded in the interdependences of education, culture, and nature. The Green School Model can be seen as an educational vision of Bhutan's Gross National Happiness (GNH) framework, and Powdyel's discourse aligns with the idea of reimagining interdependence as he, from the GNH perspective, challenges the conventional GDP-centric development model and develops a new perspective on the role and aim of education. The model emphasizes a holistic approach to education and human development that integrates eight essential elements: Nature, Society, Culture, Intellect, Academics, Aesthetics, Spirituality, and Ethics. The so-called 'Sherig Mandala' encapsulates this dynamic interdependence, urging a harmonious coexistence where education is a vehicle for sustainable development and societal well-being. In reimagining our collective futures, this model might serve as a possible contextual framing that prioritizes the interconnectedness of all aspects of life.

The four peer-reviewed articles published in this round likewise, in various ways, explore the possibilities and challenges of integrating the concept of interdependence with considerations concerning the futures of education, culture, and nature.

Karen Bjerg Petersen's article, "Reimagining Education? Reflections on the Bhutan Bacca-laureate and Nel Noddings' Concepts of Happiness, Education, and Ethics of Care," intertwines the global discourse on holistic education with the Bhutanese emphasis on happiness and care. Petersen critiques the narrow focus on skills and competency in neoliberal education

systems, advocating for a broader, value-based approach that mirrors the principles of Gross National Happiness. The Bhutan Baccalaureate's emphasis on cerebral, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual development resonates with Nel Noddings' vision of integrating care and happiness into education. This alignment underscores the notion of interdependence, suggesting that true educational success lies in nurturing interconnected human development aspects that contribute to personal and societal harmony. However, Bjerg Petersen also discusses possible challenges for this new Baccalaureate, which are essential to consider.

Michael Penzold's analysis in "Resistance in Education: An Empirical Approach to a Pedagogically Relevant Concept," drawing from Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of Liberation, explores the multifaceted nature of resistance as both a personal and collective endeavor. Through empirical studies with student teachers at LMU Munich, Penzold reveals resistance as a dynamic and emotionally charged concept essential for fostering critical thinking and autonomy. This perspective aligns with the broader theme of reimagining interdependence, where resistance becomes crucial in navigating and transforming oppressive structures within educational and societal contexts. Penzold emphasizes the interconnectedness of individual agency and collective well-being by advocating for resistance as an essential educational theme.

Randy and Kent Schroeder's exploration, "Where is the Coastline? Interdependence and Scale," uses the metaphor of a coastline to illustrate the fluid boundaries of educational and environmental paradigms. They argue that understanding the complexities of interdependence requires a nuanced appreciation of scale, where local actions have global repercussions and vice versa. This metaphorical coastline reflects the theme of reimagining interdependence by highlighting the interconnectedness inherent in our ecological and educational systems. The Schroeders exemplify their considerations by relating to the dynamics and tensions between Bhutan's GNH-inspired environmental policy and the situation on the ground, challenging readers to rethink fixed notions of boundaries and advocating for a more fluid and interconnected approach to addressing both local and more global challenges. This perspective is crucial for reimagining our futures together, recognizing that contextual framings must be flexible and inclusive to accommodate diverse environmental (and educational) realities.

Michal Pilgaard, Maja Melballe Jensen, and Jeanette Baagø, in their article "Designing an Online Learning Platform for Supporting Education for Sustainable Development," present a forward-thinking approach to integrating sustainable development into educational frameworks through an innovative online learning platform. This platform, designed with user-centric principles and interactive content, aims to foster a deep understanding of sustainable development principles. The authors advocate for a transformative educational experience that transcends traditional classroom boundaries by leveraging digital technologies. This initiative emphasizes the intricate dynamic between generic concepts such as education for sustainable development and their contextualization, as well as culturally promoting applied and experiential learning that aligns with the broader goals of interdependence and sustainable development. The platform represents a dynamic intersection of technology, education, and environmental consciousness, highlighting the interconnectedness necessary for addressing contemporary global challenges.

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This issue also introduces a new section, "Perspectives and Explorations," intended to provide a platform for innovative and interdisciplinary contributions that extend beyond the thematic scope of the various issues. This section invites works that challenge conventional

boundaries, offer fresh insights, and foster academic dialogue. The contributions in this section are food for thought but might also lead to the development of new thematic issues in the journal.

Two contributions inaugurate this section. In their peer-reviewed article, Dorte Ruge et al. present findings from a pre-pilot study on "Sustainable Competences in Higher Education." Their research highlights the challenges and opportunities in embedding sustainability competences at the bachelor's level, focusing on interdisciplinary teaching methods and integrating cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral domains. The study provides valuable insights into how teacher training can bridge the gap between traditional and future-oriented educational practices, offering a practical framework for implementing sustainable education in higher learning. It also opens for reflections on interdisciplinarity in ESD.

Johannes Adamsen's thought-provoking essay, "A Brief War Dictionary," explores the power of language in shaping our understanding of conflict and war. Through a series of concise and reflective entries, Adamsen examines how terms like "civilians," "genocide," and "education" are used, misused, and interpreted in the context of modern warfare. His work invites readers to engage with the narratives and assumptions underlying war discourse critically, highlighting the intersection of language, ideology, and education in contemporary society. Reviewed editorially, this essay complements the journal's mission by challenging conventional perspectives and encouraging deeper reflection. Like Powdye's essay on Green Schools, this essay is editorially reviewed.

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These contributions underscore the journal's mission to inspire critical reflection and transformative action in education, culture, and nature. We hope this issue provokes thought and encourages meaningful dialogue about the future of learning and its potential to shape a more interdependent, sustainable, and hopefully more peaceful world.

Through reflective analysis and empirical inquiry, these articles advocate for environmental and educational models that prioritize comprehensive well-being, ethical relationships, and the cultivation of critical resistance. The integrative approaches offer a nuanced perspective on the future of education, emphasizing the need for interconnected, adaptive, and sustainable educational practices. By various attempts to 'reimagine our futures together,' this issue highlights the importance of contextual framings that honor the pluralistic nature of the broad spectrum of global challenges and opportunities, both academic and educational, related to Sustainable Development.