

Australian Journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology. Vol 14, 2014, pp. 50

Special Issue – Collected Papers from the 2013 SELF International Conference.

Editorial

The International SELF Research Centre holds a biennial conference in different countries every two years. Since the first conference in 2002 in Katoomba Australia, the conference has been located in Australia, Germany, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Canada and, in 2013, in Singapore as a joint conference with the Educational Research Association of Singapore (ERAS). The conference continues to attract the world's leading scholars in psychology and education including Albert Bandura, Richard Shavelson, Jacquie Eccles, Richard Ryan, Marylyn Brewer, Ed Deci, and Andrew Elliot to name a few.

The Singapore conference in 2013 was one of the largest SELF conferences to date and, given its joint affiliation with ERAS, had a stronger practitioner focus than in years past with many teachers, school administrators and government officials attending. For researchers, this provided a critical opportunity to see how research is transformed into practice. For practitioners, the conference provided an exciting opportunity to see research and researchers on the cutting edge of educational and developmental psychology. What is represented here is a collection of papers from the conference that represent this meeting point.

The SELF conference has for many years produced high quality, peer reviewed conference proceedings but this is the first year in which attendees have had the opportunity to submit to a special issue of a peer reviewed international journal. The number and quality of submissions was very exciting for us and provides a snap shot of the evolving nature of the SELF conference. The submissions contained here illustrate the true international nature of the SELF conference with submissions from Australia, Asia, Europe, and the UK. Secondly, while many of the articles focus on issues that are consistent with the ongoing themes of the SELF conference, including papers on self-concept, self-efficacy, aspirations, and motivation, both the number of themes and the diversity of populations of interest have grown dramatically. In the studies collected here are adult, child, adolescent, and special needs populations. Consistent with the history of the conference, there also is a mix of intervention, psychometric, quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

A common theme of the papers in this issue is disadvantage and efforts to overcome gender, disability, and societal disadvantage. This illustrates that current SELF research is interested in both substantive and applied implications of research and that there is a desire on the part of researchers to conduct research which makes a difference and that can help overcome contextual and cultural barriers and constraints. Another common theme is the importance of developing well-validated measures and interventions. There are some advanced quantitative methodologies on display here.

These two themes are closely related in the history of the SELF conference. Indeed, over the years, the conference has focused on disadvantage. This focus has been accompanied by calls for the best possible methodologies, measures, and research designs. For this reason, methodology and applied research sessions sit comfortably together at SELF conferences. We continue to champion the need for substantive-methodological synergies: the need for the development of, and training in, advanced methodology to provide avenues to answer pressing research questions. Likewise, these research questions motivate researchers to continue to develop stronger methodologies. We are excited by this collection of papers and thank all the reviewers, conference organisers, authors, and the editorial board of AJEDP who have made this special issue possible.

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