

Editorial: Our net widens?

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This issue is a full one. It is not just the quantity of inclusions here which is new for *Other Education*—with a large special issue on German Free Alternative Schools guest edited by *Other Education*'s editorial assistant Robert Hamm, as well as non special issue peer reviewed work and book reviews—but a feature of difference “allowed” for the first time: publications in a language other than English.

This facility begins new conversations in its own right about communicating in academic education circles and about bringing to our attention educational work of value, independent of its ability to write for an English speaking audience. There are important conversations to be had in a variety of native languages apart from the writer's ability to write in English or not. Whilst most academics have by necessity English as a working language to some degree, in alternative education there are practitioners and experts whose grasp of English means they are blocked from communicating through this journal if it operates only through English and I find that excludes so much that is important. I thoroughly support conversations in this journal that can be for non-English speakers.

Naturally however there are limits to this: Any work proposed for *Other Education* needs to be introduced to me in either English, French, German or Italian. I then need a trusted academic to lead the inclusions in their own language (any are acceptable: Chinese?, Japanese? Hindi?, Polish?, Romanian?, Spanish? Amharic? Nepali? Russian? Etcetera) who speaks excellent English especially or the other introduction languages and who can guide me, blind to the native language content as I might be (and I may “phone a friend” and I reserve the right to throw up my hands and say “Oh so sorry but I just can't follow in any way... Cannot do!”) to understand the worth of the foreign language submissions to this particular journal. The proposer must also have strong academic contacts in their native tongue who can be trusted as peer reviewers for any peer-reviewed articles and I will need translation of the reviewer's feedback and initially of all abstracts (including Other Contributions) into any of the introductory languages mentioned above. So, for instance, whilst I speak about five words of Chinese, a Chinese scholar I can know and deal with through any introduction language mentioned (of which English is easiest) can work with me to potentially get a piece or set of pieces published in

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Chinese here. For all non Chinese speaking readers there would be English abstracts.

Many journals maintain a strict English language only policy and I understand the reasoning for this but I see it as impoverishing our educational awareness. With a rather specialist journal such as *Other Education* it is important to keep borders open. English only submissions and publication is maintained in those journals I imagine on account of time, resources and language ability but also inclusion of all speakers into a commonality of conversation, through English “together.” Yet, as someone with some knowledge of three foreign languages I have always felt this to be rather “colonial” and I know it excludes from understanding so much of value that occurs in a language other than English. This is especially so for an audience that does indeed operate largely in English, as is the case here with many of those looking towards *Other Education* about educational alternatives: why should they be denied insight into what happens in other countries on account of the academic hegemony of English? I see no reason. I do believe that English speaking readers of *Other Education* are interested in what happens educationally “otherwise” in Germany or China or Romania or Ethiopia and so on. What do you think? Is it worth the translation hassles?

In the present issue we have a bi-lingual issue with a mixture of English and German (some pieces are translated, some not). Managed by the superb Robert Hamm it was no hassle—in fact an utter pleasure. I hope you enjoy it and the other articles, contributions and reviews we have for you this issue.

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