

Special Issue: A Spotlight on Newcomer Graduate Students' Research

In higher education contexts, the term “newcomer” can be interpreted in particular ways in different contexts. For some, a newcomer refers to an international student traveling abroad from their home country, under study permit status, for academic purposes. Newcomers may also include individuals from international locations who are in the process of being awarded or have already secured permanent residence in another country. Regardless of interpretation and category, however, newcomers bring rich diversity of voice, perspective, and experience. It is also common knowledge that universities seek to attract newcomers to their institutions; this intention is frequently identified as a goal in higher education academic plans.

Shifting the lens to current political and economic trends—locally, nationally, and globally, it is clear that these are troubling times when diversity is often feared and subsequently not welcomed. My sense is that this stems from a hesitancy to step beyond our own “comfort and familiarity” to experience other ways of viewing, knowing, and being in the world and to also transcend beyond differences to find common ground. This hesitancy also contributes to a privileging of knowledge and, consequently, to inequity in power dynamics and relations. As educators, we are called to be bold in our advocacy and support for diversity and for supporting the learning journeys of newcomer graduate students who participate in our academic communities. We need to set the bar high, ethically and morally, to support their experience, well-being, and progress.

In my own work as a professor and associate dean international, I continue to be inspired by newcomer graduate students I am privileged to engage with and mentor. The richness of experience and perspective they generously share contributes monumentally to my own learning journey. In relationship, we recognize and celebrate the “teacher and learner” within each of us and the reciprocity from learning with and respectfully challenging one another. As educators who are privileged to welcome and work with newcomer graduate students in our respective work and learning contexts, we need to remain humble to the learning potential that resides there and to the cogent role we take up when mentoring and supporting newcomers. The potential to achieve their academic goals is directly impacted and influenced by the relationships they form along the way, and to their experience of inclusion, authentic welcoming, and support.

I applaud the editors and authors who have brought this *Special Issue* to fruition. This is compelling work and provides an earnest and welcoming space for diversity of voice, perspective, and experience to be shared and valued. Newcomer graduate students contribute significantly to the texture and landscape of our research and learning cultures and contexts. When these voices, perspectives, and experiences are authentically welcomed and supported, the learning potential for all who engage in these relationships is boundless.

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