

## **Introduction to JCIHE 16(5) 2024 Issue**

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Dear Readers –

I am pleased to share with you the JCIHE 16(5) 2024 Special Issue *Conceptualizing Micro-Level Narratives in Thematic Constructs of Internationalization* with Special Guest editors: Fakunle Omolabake & Fiona Hunter. The articles in this issue examine the micro-level dimension in the internationalization of higher education (IHE), that is situated at the individual level. While of importance, the micro level of IHE has been under-studied. This is problematic since there is an inherent connection between the participation and contribution of individuals who enable and sustain internationalization at classroom, institutional, national, and transnational levels. Individuals are influenced by the various rationales associated with the field of IHE and knowingly or unintendedly use that lens to design and oversee classroom and institutional strategies (see Raby & Kamyab, 2023). A Micro focus of internationalization can be on a range of stakeholders including, but not limited to, faculty, staff, and students. The articles in this issue focus on how IHE influences learning and agency for individuals, i.e. the micro-level narrative. The Winter Special Issue 2024 includes 12 articles with author institutional affiliations in eight countries: Italy; Netherlands; Oman; South Africa; Scotland, Sweden; Turkey; United Kingdom; United States. The JCIHE 16(5) 2024 issue also includes two book reviews. Lisa Nakahara reviews *A History of Temple University Japan* by Richard Joslyn and Bruce Stronach. The second books review is by Vanesa Polastri who reviews *Aprender en Comunidad: Prácticas Colaborativas para Transformar la Evaluación* (Learning in Community: Collaborative Practices to transform Assessment) by Lorena Basso, Magdalena Cardoner, Paula De Bonis, Mariana Ferrarelli, Stefanía Martínez León and Pedro Ravela.

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## 16(5) Special Issue Themes

There are three main themes that are found in all the articles in Issue 16(5) that intersect with **Fakunle Omolabake's** framework that conceptualizes centrality in micro-level internationalization through a decolonial approach.

### International Students

**Megan Siczek** examines lived experiences of international students over a ten-year period. **Hayley Weiner & Peter Ghazarian** examine international student experiences in seeking employment while studying in the United States. **Bhavika Sicka & Arzu Atajanova** use critical autoethnography to examine learned experiences of two international women students participating in a virtual exchange program. **Patience Mukwanbo, Faith Mkwanzazi & Winter Seshoka** examine African international students' experiences studying in South Africa during a COVID-19 pandemic-induced lockdown.

### Mobility and Racial Learning

**Mianmian Fei** examines international students of color racial learning experiences while studying in the United States. **Durak Tugay** examines the Whiteness Threshold experienced by long-term Turkish international academics while working in the United Kingdom.

### Institutional Practices

**Allison K. Yap** examines how decolonial interventions enables U.S. domestic study away students in Hawai'i with their negotiation as a student and as a visitor to Hawai'i. **Lucie Weissova, Jeanine Gregersen-Hermans, Darko Pantelic** examine academic perceptions of why continuing professional development initiatives in intercultural learning in the classroom are challenged and what strategies for success are needed. **Abass B. Isiaka & Yusuf D. Olaniyan** examine the impact of virtual mentors on decision-making prospective international students to study in the UK. **Said Al Furquani and Lomer** examine faculty perspectives in Oman about internationalization in concept and in practice showing Westernization as more valued than local knowledge. **A. Eltayb & Jennifer Valcke** explore how a Collaborative Online International Learning teacher training course results in personal and professional growth in perspectives, pedagogical approaches, cultural humility, and professional practices.

## Special Issue Articles

**Omolabake Fakunle (Scotland) and Fiona Hunter (Italy). Conceptualizing micro-level internationalization from empirical and conceptual constructs: Adding the human dimension.**

This Article introduces the Special Issue theme of micro-level internationalization that uses new lens based on individual narratives as a tool to assess dimensions of engagement in internationalization. The primary dimensions found in micro-level internationalization are Mobility, Transformational Learning, Development, Context, and Conceptual Framing.

**Abass B. Isiaka (UK) & Yusuf D. Olaniyan (UK). Below the Radar Agents: Roles of Virtual Mentors in the Decision-Making Process and Cultural Awareness of Prospective International Students**

This article examines the impact of virtual mentors (VM) on international student decisions to study abroad. A specific focus is on the relationship between Bourdieu's cultural intermediation and Barad's new materialism. Findings show that prospective students deem the roles of VM crucial in their international education journey, with technology enhancing their access to resources facilitated by these mentors. However, students express a need for greater cultural awareness in virtual mentorship interactions.

**Siczek, Megan, (USA). The lived experience of internationally mobile students: A longitudinal study,**

This article examines lived experiences of two international students, one from Inner Mongolia, China and the other from Ecuador who are studying in the United States. Four key themes emerge from how these students describe

their mobility experience overtime: 1) study abroad as self-initiated and self-fulfilling; 2) key moments shape experience; 3) mobility aids in construction of self; and 4) complex perceptions relating to “home.” Each of these students display agency in the context of their mobility experiences.

**Patience Mukwanbo** (*Scotland*), **Faith Mkwanzazi** (South Africa) & **Winter Seshoka** (South Africa). **The Policy and Practice of Internationalization in the global-South: African international students’ experiences in South Africa during COVID-19**

This article focuses on the recruitment and teaching of international students at two South African universities between 2020-2022, during the COVID-19 pandemic-induced lockdown. The study draws on Ubuntu and affiliation as key capabilities for understanding global South practices of higher education internationalization. Findings reframe internationalization as a reciprocal relationship based on mutual interconnectedness and mutual values that does not just respond to broader neo-liberal narratives but ought to foster student and institutional flourishing.

**Allison K. Yap** (*USA*). **Troubling Paradise: Exploring the Experiences of National Student Exchange Participants to the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.**

This article examines a less discussed aspect of student mobility, domestic study away in which U.S. students travel to other parts of the U.S. to study. This article focuses on lived experiences of U.S. students who study in Hawai‘i. Decolonial interventions were given to the students to help students navigate and experience Hawai‘i as foreign and familiar as they negotiate their place here as both students and visitors/tourists.

**Bhavika Sicka** (*USA*) & **Arzu Atajanova** (*Turkey*). **Global South Sisterhood in a Virtual Exchange: A Critical Autoethnography**

This article is an autoethnography of two women international students who critically reflect on their intellectual, emotional, linguistic, and cultural growth during a virtual exchange COIL program offered during COVID-19 pandemic. Using critical internationalization perspective, findings show improvement in English language skills while resisting a deficit orientation of English language learning and call for equitable, transformative exchanges that honor southern epistemologies. Through friendship, the authors learned more about their Turkmenistan and Indian cultures and personalities within the exchange context.

**Lucie Weissova** (*Sweden/Italy*), **Jeanine Gregersen-Hermans**, (*Netherlands/Italy*), & **Darko Pantelic** (*Sweden*). **Academic Voices: Continuing Professional Development for Teaching in Internationalized Classrooms.**

This article examines how academics need continuing professional development (CPD) to maximize the benefits of international classrooms while lacking necessary competence, resources, and tools. Universities that offer CPD initiatives often suffer from low enrollment and high drop-out rates. Academic perceptions and CPD needs show the importance of immersive international experiences of staff over disciplinary affiliation, reveal a disconnect between perceived challenges for teaching in the international classroom and academics' interest in CPD, and underscore the importance of adopting an andragogical adult learning centered approach in the design and delivery of CPD.

**A. Eltayb** (*Sweden*) & **Jennifer Valcke** (*Sweden*) **Insights from Glocal Educators: Unveiling the transformative journeys of Educational Developers**

This article explores the impact of micro-level individual dimensions in the Internationalisation of Higher Education (IHE) on a teacher training course for Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL). Findings show how COIL can build personal and professional growth in perspectives, pedagogical approaches, cultural humility, and professional practices.

**Hayley Weiner** (*USA*) & **Peter Ghazarian** (*USA*). **From the Personal to the Professional: International Student Experiences of Seeking Employment in the United States**

This article examines international students in U.S. higher education who pursue work and who must balance personal and professional pressures while seeking employment. A focus is made on learning about personal growth, navigation of economic pressures, and experiences of seeking employment of international students. Results show that international students share similar experiences with their domestic counterparts. Yet they also are navigating a new cultural context, dealing with economic pressure, and navigating barriers to their employment search.

**Said Al Furquani (Oman) and Sylvie Lomer (United Kingdom). Faculty Constructions of Internationalization: Practice and Perception in Omani Higher Education.**

This article draws on a policy document analysis and interviews with academic staff members at a college in Oman to explore how academics and leaders conceptualised and adopted internationalisation to their pedagogical practices while acknowledging tensions about adopting 'global standards' that reflect inequalities of power shaped by coloniality. Findings show that faculty were positive towards internationalization in general, but identified tensions, such as English over Arabic, lower value on local forms of knowledge, and reliance on globalized curricula and materials.

**Durak Tugay (UK). Passing the Whiteness Threshold: The Lived Experiences of UK-based Turkish Academics**

This article examines implications of long-term international academic mobility on the lives of Turkish academics working in the United Kingdom (UK). The findings share how ethnicity, gender, and religion intersect to shape the academics' experiences working at a UK higher education institution. Findings show that professionally, opportunities and challenges of an academic career in the UK was important, while socially, a "Whiteness threshold" impacts integration and success of Turkish academics.

**Mianmian Fei, (USA). Re-Examining Fries-Britt's Learning Race in a U.S. Context Emergent Framework Drawing on the Micro-Level Narratives of International Students in the United States**

This essay examines micro-level narratives of international students of color regarding racial learning experiences using a literature review. The findings show that the Fries-Britt et al.'s (2014) Learning Race in a U.S. Context (LRUSC) emergent framework is generally applicable but can benefit from incorporating the following revisions: 1) broadening the scope of racial encounters and experiences; 2) emphasizing the impacts of home country context; and 3) leaving the outcomes of racial learning open.

**Fakunle Omolabake (Scotland). Conceptualizing Centrality in Micro-level Internationalization Through a Decolonial Approach.**

This essay introduces a holistic framework for examining individual narratives within the internationalization processes. Using centrality as the conceptual framework and adding a decolonial approach, four dimensions are identified: Broadening Epistemological approach to knowledge, Cultural inclusivity, Representation and Targeted allyship. An ARC (Active involvement – Recognition – Contribution) model is provided to support a practical application of centrality framework..

**Book Review by Lisa Nakahara, USA**

Richard Joslyn and Bruce Stronach. *The History of Temple University Japan: An Experiment in International Education*. Temple University Press, 2023.

**Book Review by Vanesa Polastri, Argentina**

Lorena Basso, Magdalena Cardoner, Paula De Bonis, Mariana Ferrarelli, Stefanía Martínez León and Pedro Ravela. *Aprender en Comunidad: Prácticas Colaborativas para Transformar la Evaluación (Learning in Community: Collaborative Practices to transform Assessment)*. Grupo Magro Editores, 2023.

**About the Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education (JCIHE)**

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The entire JCIHE managing and editorial team is critical to the quality of production of this and every issue. It is their dedication that helps keep the standards and integrity for the journal.

Editor-in-Chief,  
Rosalind Latiner Raby  
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