

Editorial: Open Issue 2026

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In this 11th issue, Confero turns its attention to questions of justice and equity in education, both within the classroom and in wider pedagogical debates. Two articles use case studies of education in Sweden to consider the potential of pedagogies and organizational practices that aim to counteract systemic inequalities and open up new pathways for critical dialogue, one focused on critiquing the notion of ‘inclusion’ in Swedish special education and one on epistemic courage as a pedagogical tool. A third essay examines how mathematics education, often considered a politically neutral discipline, is entangled in overlapping sociopolitical crises and calls for a renewed vision in which math education is an active force for positive change. Taken together, the three articles demonstrate the need for educational practices that attend to the political and social challenges of our times.

In the first essay titled *From Inclusion to Organizational Differentiation?*, researcher Mimmi Norgren Hansson offers both timely and novel insights into contemporary debates on special education. Using Nancy Fraser’s redistribution-recognition framework, the essay engages with Swedish inclusion discourse and, in doing so, sheds light on affirmative and transformative strategies. By examining tensions between competing approaches to inclusion, the essay moves beyond conventional debates on advantaged and disadvantaged groups of pupils, transforming pedagogical matters into questions of justice. Norgren-Hansson questions dichotomous understandings of inclusion and organizational differentiation, suggesting that these approaches may be less opposed than commonly assumed. A significant contribution of the essay is its rethinking of individual and collective needs related to special education. In

challenging current lines of thought, Norgren Hansson invites reflection on organizational and normative ways of pursuing educational equality.

In the second essay titled *For Whom the Bell Tolls: Mathematics Education in Times of Crisis*, Constantinos Xenofontos discusses the importance of recognizing how the political-economic analysis of modern crises shapes the way mathematics students view and engage with said crises. His timely argument comes during a period when the world witnesses multiple wars, a genocide, economic hardships and an ever-pressing environmental crisis. He argues that mathematics education can influence the way crises are understood by emphasizing certain perspectives such as efficiency or profit over other social or moral considerations. He proposes that mathematics ought to recognize its institutional and pedagogical role in understanding crises. Through a reinterpretation of Skovsmose's (2021) categories for the field of education, in the picturing, constituting, and formatting of crises, Xenofontos encourages a reflexive approach that centers social justice. In doing so, he argues that the myth of neutrality within mathematics education needs to be scrutinized, and that engaging with political, social and ethical dimensions is crucial.

In the essay *Epistemic Courage and Literary Instruction: An Exploratory Conceptual Discussion Addressing Contemporary Challenges in Swedish High Schools*, Karl Ågerup then examines the concept of epistemic courage. Against a backdrop of political polarisation and declining public dialogue, Ågerup considers epistemic and dialogical courage as a way for schools to help young people become autonomous and confident, while also remaining open to diverse and sometimes challenging perspectives that differ from their own. Drawing on Jonathan Ichikawa's concept of epistemic courage and theories of transformative learning, Ågerup argues for classroom practices that encourage students to test their beliefs. Literature and literature instruction can become pedagogical resources through which pressing and sometimes difficult social and ethical questions can be raised and explored. This pushes students to encounter unfamiliar perspectives in ways that support democratic participation.

Read together, the three contributions in *Confero's* eleventh issue situate education within an ongoing polycrisis, one that operates as much through the micro-politics of the classroom as through the macro-structures of disciplinary and institutional practice. Each contribution, in its own way, pushes against the idea that educational spaces and disciplines can be neutral, and invites the reader to reflect on the kind of education we want to build in response.

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