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Special issue of TEJ: What is to be done with curriculum and educational foundations' critical knowledges? New qualitative research on conscientizing preservice and in-service teachers

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Special issue of *TEJ*:
**What is to be done with curriculum and
educational foundations' critical knowledges?**
**New qualitative research on conscientizing
preservice and in-service teachers**

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Abstract

In this essay, we provide a brief introductory statement to the special issue of *Teaching Education* titled *What is To Be Done with Curriculum and Educational Foundations' Critical Knowledges? New Qualitative Research on Conscientizing Preservice and In-Service Teachers*. In our introductory statement, we describe the specific aim and broad purposes of the special issue and characterize its contents. Our specific aim with the special issue is to advance the conscientization of preservice and in-service teachers via critical pedagogies and race-based epistemologies. Our broad purposes are to (a) resist the ascendant, whitened, and Eurocentric fascism via our collective pedagogical labor in teacher education and (b) reorient curriculum and educational foundations' critical knowledges toward institutional praxis. We conclude our introductory statement by characterizing the contents of the special issue for teacher educators and teacher education researchers.

Keywords: Critical pedagogy, race-based epistemologies, teacher education, professional development, curriculum studies, educational foundations

The specific research aim of our special issue of *Teaching Education* is to advance new qualitative research on conscientizing preservice and in-service teachers. Answering the research question *What is to be done with curriculum and educational foundations' critical knowledges*, we worked with contributors on this special issue with two broad intertwining purposes: (a) to resist the ascendant, whitened, and Eurocentric fascism through our collective pedagogical labor in teacher education and (b) to reorient curriculum and educational foundations' critical knowledges toward institutional praxis.

Regarding resistance in teacher education, we understand our work in this special issue as essentially against the grain of national and international trends emblematic of the openly fascist Trump Era in the US. In working against the grain, we understand the frustrations of our first invited commentator – Timothy Lensmire (2018) – that, very probably, much of this work will be ignored in colleges of education and departments of teacher education, despite our efforts. We also understand the frustrations of our second invited commentator – Socorro Herrera (2018) – that challenging whiteness in colleges of education, teacher education departments, or schools will, very probably, never be enough or accomplish what needs to be done. Given the dark, openly-racist, nativist, and authoritarian times, nonetheless, we emphasize our ethical responsibility to persist. Jupp, Berry, and Morales, presenting in a recent graduate seminar at University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, implored an all Latinx group of graduate students to maintain anti-racist positions despite salient fears of workplace repercussions or professional castigations while, at the same time, we attended to our students' anxieties. In our work here, we emphasize the same questions we put to our doctoral students: Are we to accept the detention and incarceration of brown-skinned families and children? Are we to accept the ongoing racialized violence against Black youth? Despite frustrations, we agree with our invited commentators that much is to be gained and lost in the struggle over hearts and minds of preservice and in-service teachers. This struggle over hearts and minds of teachers is evident in the research of all contributors to this special issue.

Regarding reorientation of curriculum and educational foundations, our special issue works through troubled legacies of critical knowledges. Developing recent directions in critical pedagogy laid out by Kohli, Picower, Martinez, and Ortiz (2015), contributors to this special issue implicitly draw on notions of conscientization from predecessors Freire (1970/2001), Giroux (1985), or hooks (1994) and race-based epistemologies from predecessors Gordon (1990), Scheurich and Young (1997), or Delgado Bernal (2002). Nonetheless, in our special issue, contributors' pedagogical labor moves beyond the transmissive dream of Cartesian rationalism that dominated too many of our foremothers and fathers' scholarship. Leaving the patrician habits of the writer's desk, the conference hall, and the reduced group

of 'comrades' that seemingly contented too many of our predecessors, instead researchers in this special issue drive at pedagogical research that is intended to fold directly back into teacher education or professional development praxis. Putting race-based epistemologies to work through critical pedagogies studied in context, contributors to this special issue leverage Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Race Feminism (CRF), Chicana Feminist Epistemologies (CFE) and Latinx Critical Race Theory (LatCRT), and Critical White Studies (CWS) and Second-wave Whiteness Pedagogies (WP2) directly into teacher education and professional development settings. Following the notion of *deploying* our critical legacies with teachers, the research in this special issue is designed to both exemplify and inform critical interventions in teacher education and professional development. In this way, we exemplify work that seeks to reorient curriculum and education foundations by emphasizing historical and newly emergent directions that combine *curriculum theorizing* with coherent *curriculum doing*.¹

What follows is a characterization of the special issue's contents to help teacher educators and teacher education researchers find resources to continue the resistant struggle and drive curriculum and educational foundations toward institutional praxis. Three articles draw on CRT and CRF in analyzing data collected with preservice and in-service teachers in multicultural contexts. Pour-Khorshid (2018) draws on CRT to provide analyses of an informal professional development group designed to give space, life, and sustenance to activist teachers of color within the whitestream constraints of public schools. Blaisdell (2018) draws on CRT to document the author's professional development struggles, reversals, and advancements in working with predominantly white faculty within the multicultural context of an urban school. Berry and Cook (2018) draw on CRF and engaged pedagogy to describe interactions with African American preservice teachers in multicultural contexts that begin to outline a differently oriented critical pedagogy for preservice teachers of color.

Two articles draw on CFE or LatCRT in analyzing data collected with Latinx preservice and in-service teachers. Morales (2018) draws on CFE and LatCRT to analyze continued emotional and professional support for Latina teachers after having successfully guided them into teaching in a Grow Your Own Grant. Caldas (2018) draws on Freire (1970/2001) and LatCRT in her use of drama as critical pedagogy for activating Latinx preservice teachers' activism.

Three articles draw on CWS or WP2 in analyzing data collected with white preservice and in-service teachers. Alvarez and Milner (2018) draw on CWS' notions of racial colorblindness to analyze data collected with white teachers on the topic of police violence in communities of color. McManimon and Casey (2018) draw on WP2 to analyze race-visible interactions with white teachers who self-selected for race-visible professional development. Whitaker, Hardee, Johnson, and McFaden (2018) draw on WP2 and Southern

Studies in discussing the emotionality of white preservice teachers' romantic fictions, guilt, racial tragedy, and other responses to whiteness pedagogies.

Finally, as referenced above, our special issue is rounded out with comments by Timothy Lensmire and Socorro Herrera, senior scholars in critical teacher education.

Note

1. We think our work here squarely adds to Dr Kridel's reading of curriculum archives, especially his analysis of Bergamo Curriculum Conference programs of the mid 1970s through the year 2000 which, for Dr. Kridel (1999), evidenced more than anything else, an infusion of critical theory into teacher education practices. We hope this special issue extends Dr Kridel's concerns with an historicized vision of curriculum and his concerns for *teaching education*.

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Notes on contributors

James C. Jupp, a White, middle-class male, spent 18 years teaching and learning in de facto segregated schools in the Southwest experimenting with culturally relevant and critical pedagogies before moving on to preparing teachers in the South and in Texas. He is currently Professor and Chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, the largest Hispanic Serving Institution in the continental US.

Ann Mogush Mason is a white, upper-middle class cis woman from the Midwest whose early studies in sociology and her teaching background in elementary and early childhood education contribute to her current work preparing elementary school teachers who are sociopolitically conscious and who understand teaching as a political act. She currently serves as Program Director of Elementary Education at the University of Minnesota.

Amanda Morales is a biracial Latina from the rural mid-West whose research and practice builds on her prior work in teacher preparation, recruitment and retention, and diversity leadership affiliated with the Center for Intercultural, Multilingual Advocacy at Kansas State University. She currently serves as Assistant Professor of Multicultural Education at University of Nebraska.

Theodora Regina Berry, a Black American middle-class woman of Caribbean and Cherokee heritage, spent nearly 20 years researching, teaching, and learning in socially, politically, and culturally diverse communities in the US and Germany. She currently serves as Professor and Chair of the Department of African American Studies at San José State University in the California State University System.

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