



*unFIX Me in the Red:
Re/collections and Re/novations*

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Abstract:

In ruminating on authors' contributions in this issue, Wiebe's 2014 video, *Curricular Fixations and Poetic Tactics*, is used as an anchor to consider the limitations of official and Tylerian curriculum, thought of as infrastructure. The need for reconstructing meanings, deliberating ideas, and reflecting in solitude are suggested as means to unfix ourselves from the comforts of canonized bodies of knowledge which eliminate difference and confine possibilities.

Keywords: postmodern curriculum; intended curriculum; infrastructure; reconstructing meaning; fixing; unfixing; deliberation; solitude

My hand became my father's hand
That day,
For a second or two, as I lifted the fish, and I could feel his loneliness
My father's, like mine

(Lee, 2002, p. 13)

Fixing and renovations have been on my mind as I've been looking for a home closer to the university. Most listings need some sort of work—I've been weighing the pros and cons of this house and that house and I can't help but see parallels to this issue of JCACS. And as I consider my choices, my mind jumps to Sean Wiebe's 2014 video, [Curricular Fixations and Poetic Tactics](#).

Wiebe's video first introduced me to *The Invention of Solitude*, a memoir by Paul Auster. In the first section of the book, titled "Portrait of an Invisible Man," Auster rebuilds his memory of his late father through combining and constructing meaning from the artifacts his father left. His method reminds me of the post-qualitative methodologies that seek to make meaning from creative reconstructions (Barad, 2007). Auster's title is clever—How does one make a portrait of an invisible man? I think of the process of foregrounding. The structure creates substance, but may be unseen—the man is bodied even though he seems invisible. This notion leads me to consider how curriculum infrastructure is essential but does not make visible the learning. I liken this idea to a house as infrastructure, essential but secondary to the human relational occurring within.

Wiebe (2014) talks about fixing and unfixing in his video. He recounts his father's affinity with repair and renovation and compares fixing to affixing or stilling meaning, and to definitions which construct a centre, value, purpose, or foundation. In this editorial, steeped in Wiebe's warnings that fixing and imagining permanence eliminates difference and confines openings, I draw upon the perspectives of this issue's authors in thinking about the limitations of curriculum infrastructure and the need for reconstructing meanings, deliberating ideas, and reflecting in solitude as means to unfix ourselves.

Infrastructure

Like Wiebe (2014), perhaps I recognize the benefits of a fixed base, a foundation from where the construction of family can grow. I see too, the "illusion of fixation" (3:58), that the fixed home, or the word with an affixed definition, is only infrastructure and that fixing the deterioration, closing the hole, does not necessarily improve what is, potentially closes possibilities, and perhaps even returns us to something that no longer serves us.

In this issue, infrastructure might be a way to think about Seitz's description of the official or intended curriculum, or, likewise, Nguyen and Slavik's reference to Tyler's (1949) rationale for developing curriculum. School purposes, educational experiences, organization of experiences, and evaluation are infrastructural frames, similar to a building. Nguyen and Slavik realized that as beginning teachers, even with a firm Tylerian foundation, "no textbook description had prepared [them] for dealing with [the] many complicated situations" of the relational. The work of thinking and interacting in an unfolding learning space requires its own energy within the infrastructure. Nguyen and Slavik employ the empty space of haiku as a place that initiates open dialogue between reader

and poet, comparing that interaction to Dewey's (1916) promotion of learner and educator conversations.

Wiebe (2014) apprises that something fixed on a wall is not fixed at all . . . Perhaps that which we collect and canonize, our body of knowledge, should wear out like our bodies. Each generation, then, would need to discover its own body for its own time. We couldn't simply inherit our father's house perfectly fixed up anymore than we could inherit our father's body. (4:32-5:03)

In this intimation, Tylerian (1949) infrastructure can never become static. The infrastructure can be inherited but it is always different—"the trace becomes independent of its source" (Derrida in Padgaonkar, 1979, p. 3).

Untethered Possibilities

Unfixing has also been on my mind. I recently experienced the "disorienting dilemma" (Docherty-Skippen & Brown, this issue) of becoming unfixated—a jolt that questioned how I had created a particular interpretation. It occurred when I went back to the house I had put an offer on. In my mind, I was quite sure that the second floor had three bedrooms and that the playroom on the 3rd floor could serve as a fourth bedroom. To my incredulity, the house had only two bedrooms on the second floor and the upstairs playroom was actually the third bedroom. With our hearts still set on the house, in spite of its missing bedroom, my family was forced to redesign new possibilities. Brown, in her article with Docherty-Skippen, recalls the challenge of undoing preconceived knowledge and in this process, making room for new beliefs. As with my reconfiguration of room space at my new house, shifts in conceptual paradigms offer opportunities for new possibilities to arise (Doll, 1995).

Deliberation

While tethered to their particular notions of curriculum studies and the purpose of education, the authors in this issue articulate the possibilities of various paradigms. Madeline Grumet (1988) quotes Martin Buber defining education as letting "a selection of the world affect a person through the medium of another person" (p. 107). It is in the interaction, as well as in the solitude, within the infrastructure where "space reaches out from us and translates the world" (Carson, 1996, p. 70).

Thus, I think of this issue as a space for reconstruction, with each author as a renovator. Seitz notes that the intended curriculum does not always align with the enacted and assessed curricula, and she works towards greater clarity and commonality. Docherty-Skippen and Brown utilize duoethnography to discover the variable constructed understandings of experience. Fisher chases rabbits down rabbit holes, "a metaphor for chasing the most interesting ideas that may some day be useful for something." I see renovation in Nguyen and Slavik's recollection of Dewey's (1922) notion of deliberation as

an experiment in finding out what the various lines of possible action are. . . . [Deliberation] is an experiment in making various combinations of selected elements of habits and impulses, to see what the resultant action would be like if it were entered upon. (p. 190)

And the traversing of the possibilities of uncharted roads is also what Brar navigates, using hermeneutic inquiry to study "the space between the text and the researcher where interpretation and subsequent appropriation occurs as it leads to a new understanding."

Solitude

I believe the transformative space further requires deep reflection. Joseph Campbell (1989) has written about rights of passages and separation phases. He explains that “demons are our own limitations . . . and as each of these are conquered . . . the consciousness of the quester is enlarged” (1989, p. 28). The opening epigraph by Dennis Dodd Lee echoes the solitude of mindful reflection as well as the notion of infrastructure, the intergenerational hand pointing to the collected and canonized body of knowledge (Doll, 1989).

This collection of articles is a fixing, an attempt to support an infrastructure to begin to think about how to unfix ourselves from our comfortable worlds. The 1999 film, *The Matrix*, introduced the popular symbol of the blue pill referring to the false security of illusion and the red pill to the ability to experience the often painful truth. I use Wiebe’s (2014) words to conclude—to acknowledge the importance of “official” or infrastructural curricula, to know the extent of their limitations, and to consider reconstructions, deliberations, and solitude as means to thrive as learners:

I am in this place of generosity, somehow feeling my technical inheritance to tools, to technique, to problems and solutions, but simultaneously knowing that I can discover tools for myself, that I can even add to my inheritance, contribute to my father’s world which is not dead, but ever alive in me and others who look back with a willingness to understand anew. (6:30-7:05)

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