

Reimagining Education: Critical Theories, Diverse Identities, and Societal Dynamics

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In today's rapidly changing educational landscape, it is essential to continuously engage with various factors shaping our learning environments. As we confront complex societal challenges, research in education becomes increasingly crucial, enhancing our understanding and guiding us towards more effective and inclusive educational approaches. Recent scholarly work, with its comprehensive scope, addresses diverse themes central to current educational discourse and practice.

In this Fall Issue, three thematic areas stand out for their relevance and impact on contemporary education. These themes are not just reflective of current academic inquiries but are also indicative of the shifting paradigms within the educational sector. They offer a lens through which we can examine and re-evaluate our approaches, strategies, and beliefs in the realm of education.

The first theme, **Critical Theories and Educational Practices**, presents a series of papers that skillfully integrate critical theories into educational discussions. Clark's nuanced exploration of disability definitions, Tejpar and Butler's analytical study on attitudes towards disability through the lens of Critical Disability Theory, and Attia's insightful application of Critical Race Theory in ESL classrooms, collectively underscore the important role of theoretical frameworks. These frameworks serve as crucial tools in unraveling and addressing some of the easily taken-for-granted issues in education.

Moving to the second theme, **Teacher and Student Identity in Educational Systems**, a diverse range of papers probe into the complex identities and experiences of teachers and students within the educational ecosystem. From Alexander and Werbitsky's revealing study of offshore school teachers to Skelton's introspective narrative on his journey to becoming a university teacher, each piece contributes significantly to our understanding of identity dynamics in educational contexts. Furthermore, Wilson and Matheson's investigation into the lived experiences of suspended youth and Kazmi et al.'s innovative use of métissage in feminist research enrich our perspectives on the challenges and developmental journeys of educators and students alike.

Lastly, the theme **Impact of Social and Cultural Dynamics in Education** captures the extensive influence of external social and cultural factors on educational structures and processes. Nelson's examination of the effects of parents' social media usage on school principals and Haye and Patrick's analysis of far-right movements' incursions into Canadian postsecondary campuses highlight the profound interplay between societal issues and educational environments. These studies illuminate the need for educators and policymakers to remain vigilant and responsive to the external influences that shape the educational milieu.

These themes not only represent the diverse and rich array of current educational research but also serve as a call to action for educators, researchers, and policymakers. They remind us of the need to constantly adapt, innovate, and critically engage with the evolving realities of education in our quest to foster more effective, inclusive, and empowering learning environments.

In This Issue

This 2023 Fall Issue includes nine articles:

Haley Clark contributed a position paper entitled *Defining Disability: Reviewing the Construct of Special Education*. Within this position paper, Clark highlights the impacts that terminology related to disability used in schools can have significant impacts on students. Clark discusses commonalities across definitions of "disability" and "special needs" and problematizes the notion of a standardized definition which would undermine the complexity and individuality of each student. Clark concludes with calls for educators and policymakers to carefully consider the impacts that labels may have on certain populations.

Sunaira Tejpar and Alana Butler contributed a literature review entitled *Looking in the Mirror: Attitudes Toward Disability*. Within their literature review, Tejpar and Butler investigate how Critical Disability Theory and Disability Critical Race Theory can shed light on students' perceptions of their own exceptionalities. They discuss Disability Critical Race Theory's framing of disability as a system of exclusion, reviewing evidence that those with disabilities have been excluded from sporting and educational activities. Drawing on Disability Critical Race Theory, they review evidence that racialized students have been disproportionately identified as having disabilities. The authors conclude that Disability Critical Race Theory and Disability Critical Race Theory can confront ableist views to empower students with disabilities and mitigate the impacts of internalized ableism.

Shaden S. Attia contributed a position paper entitled *Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality: Race, Culture, and Identity in the ESL Classroom*. This paper explores the application of Critical Race Theory (CRT), intersectionality, and various teaching strategies in K-12 ESL classrooms to teach race, culture, and identity. It emphasizes the significance of these theories in fostering inclusivity and a positive learning environment, and discusses practical in-class activities centered on these themes.

Ian Alexander and Laura Werbitsky contributed a research article entitled *How British Columbia Offshore School Teachers are Constructed on Government Websites*. Within their study, Alexander and Werbitsky use critical discourse analysis to characterize different constructions of teachers in the British Columbia offshore schools program. Through their analysis of videos and text on the websites, they elucidate three distinct and contradictory constructions of teachers. The authors contextualize the constructions as neoliberal subjects who are viewed simultaneously as agents, responsible for their own actions and well-being, and needing to conform to the demands of neoliberal markets.

Lucas Skelton contributed a position paper entitled *Becoming "Teacher": A Narrative Journey from Undergraduate Education Student to University Instructor*. This paper narrates the formative experiences of a novice university instructor who also teaches English as an Additional Language (EAL). By sharing insights from self-experiences as an undergraduate education student, an EAL educator for adults, and a first-term university sessional instructor, Skelton provides valuable lessons and reflections that emerging university educators can resonate with and learn from.

Adrienne Z. Wilson and Ian A. Matheson contributed a research article entitled *Exploring the Lived Experience of Youth Who Have Been Suspended From Secondary School: A Narrative Inquiry*. Within their article, Wilson and Matheson explore the lived experiences of three youths who have been suspended one or more times from Ontario secondary schools. Analysis of interview data elicited themes of aspirations, feelings of being excluded or ignored, childhood adversity, and parental support and expectations. Drawing on a model of ostracism, the authors highlight how toxic stress and ostracism may have led to an overall sense of alienation for two of the participants, while having core needs met allowed one participant to avoid resigning to alienation. The authors note the value of educators reframing students' behaviors through a toxic stress and ostracism lens.

Nabila Kazmi, Allison Balabuch, and Sunny Jun contributed a research article entitled *Why Bother? A Métissage*. In this research article, Kazmi et al. use métissage, a poetic and expressive art form, to weave together and reflect on the experiences that underpin their work and research as feminists. The authors' stories reaffirm their commitment to their work, locating within the métissage a safe space to share and listen. They reflect on the importance of their personal stories in informing why and how they work to confront hegemonic and patriarchal systems.

Erika E. Nelson contributed a research article entitled *Piloting the Power of the Post: The Impact of Parents' Social Media Use on Canadian Urban Middle Level Principals*. In this pilot research project, Nelson explores principals' perceptions of the impact of parents' social media use on their professional roles. Data was gathered from an online survey and interviews with five Canadian urban middle level principals, analyzed using Maietta et al.'s (2021) "Sort, Sift, Think, and Shift" method for qualitative data analysis. The findings highlight principals' concerns about parental behavior on social media and its influence on their work schedules, decision-making processes, and overall roles, while also demonstrating the value of conducting pilot studies in doctoral research.

Everton Haye and Justin Patrick contributed a research article entitled *Far-Right Incursions on Canadian Postsecondary Campuses 2012-2022: A Qualitative Content Analysis*. In this article, Haye and Patrick draw on 56

cases across 26 campuses to analyze far-right movements' attempts to infiltrate Canadian postsecondary campuses from 2012-2022. Common tactics included forming white student unions, and distributing posters and graffiti promoting white supremacy and hate towards culturally diverse groups such as Black, Indigenous, and Jewish students. The authors emphasize the importance of viewing these movements as security threats and suggest strategies such as intercultural dialogue and strong extracurricular participation to counteract and heal from these incursions.

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