



International Journal of
Curriculum and Social Justice

Editor's Introduction: Inaugural Issue of CSJ

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With Volume 1, Issue 1 we proudly launch the *International Journal of Curriculum and Social Justice*, the first journal in the field of curriculum studies specifically dedicated to issues of social justice from an international perspective. *CSJ* is an online, open access, themed-issue journal that seeks cutting-edge, critical proposals related to the wide variety of interpretations for what social justice might mean and how it can function in educational ways of being and knowing. Wishing to keep such interpretations as open as possible in order to embrace the multiplicities of its definition and the expression of its processes for an inclusive, international journal, we conceptualize social justice to mean the myriad understandings, processes, ideas, and ideals that explicitly attend to critical questions related to equity, access, rights, and freedoms. Potential themes include, but are by no means limited to, examinations of race, class, gender, gender identity and expression, indigeneity, language, (perceived) ability, age, nationality, religion, equity and access.

Social justice has long been central to many projects at the heart of curriculum studies across the globe. However, parallel to North American constructions that concern Herbert Spencer's (1852) famous question

regarding what knowledge is of most worth, there is also a history in curriculum studies of simultaneously having a relatively narrow scope of what knowledges can mean and ignoring significant scholarship from people of color, women, indigenous and queer voices, and the like. For example, even the third edition of Herbert Kliebard's (2004) important work, *The Struggle for American Curriculum, 1893-1958*, has no mention of Anna Julia Cooper, W.E.B. DuBois, Carter G. Woodson, or Mary McLeod Bethune, all central figures in US education and its development. All who are also scholar/teacher/activists of African descent. Kliebard similarly ends his work in 1958 when curriculum, from his perspective, begins to further proliferate into a greater number of branches and perspectives, a construction that seems to underscore his construction of history largely without non-White, non-male, non-middle/upper class, non-Christian (etc.) peoples. Also missing from Kliebard's discussion is an acknowledgement of non-European and non-Western educational influences and possibilities in US education.

What is perhaps most problematic about this framing of educational knowledges is that it is often paralleled across the globe, albeit with particularized differences of each nation-state's socio-economic-cultural-historical trajectories. In short, it isn't so much that there aren't a multitude of educational possibilities about what curriculum might mean or how it can function but rather that educational ideals, ideas, and processes are constantly framed and re-framed along particularly narrow visions with equally narrow sets of answers. This is not just a problem in a technological age where information changes as rapidly as it can be exchanged. Schooling is always academic and social and all academic content, regardless of topic or delivery is at once necessarily social, academic, and political. This is because academic content is necessarily and inextricably about ideas, processes, and ecologies in relation that is a choice of this over that. Such framing is therefore also a serious problem for educational questions of social justice through which

children and youth learn about themselves in relation to others in implicit and explicit ways.

Yet the past three decades have seen a proliferation of curriculum studies in non-North American contexts on the one hand and awareness between nations and curricular visions on the other. Central to the development of this journal, curriculum studies across national boundaries has also (re)turned its attention to questions of equity, access, and social justice. What makes statements like this problematic is that there have always been curriculum voices of social justice, and, as noted above, it is more a question of how to frame a field rather than the presence of possibilities.

For example, unlike Kliebard's framing of curriculum, Louis A. Castenell Jr. and William F. Pinar's (1993) *Understanding Curriculum as Racial Text: Representations of Identity and Difference in Education*, specifically addresses questions of inequity and difference as deficit as well as the intersections of race, gender and class. *Understanding Curriculum*, the now classic work edited by Pinar, William M. Reynolds, Patrick Slattery, and Peter M. Taubman (1995) has chapters dedicated to "Understanding Curriculum" as "Political," "Racial," and "Gender Text." However, as contemporary scholars have noted (e.g., Brown & Au, 2014; Hendry, 2011; Watkins, 2001), our curriculum moment is as much about acknowledging often-unarticulated or generally disregarded curricular histories as it is about either the consideration of our curriculum present or dreaming and/or warning of possible curricular futures. As importantly, this journal, while certainly a place of critique, is not intended as a platform for throwing curricular babies out with the bathwater, whole hog (to complete the mixing of metaphors). Rather we seek a project that at once acknowledges curricular visions that are central to possible ways of conceptualizing the field (e.g., Kliebard, 2004) in ways that simultaneously underscore noticeable absences while expressly moving to further open and

deepen such conversations so that they better reflect the multiplicities of curricular voices and visions.

From this perspective, *CSJ* makes explicit the centrality of social justice in the field of curriculum studies that simultaneously builds upon a history of social justice in curricular scholarship. The point here is not that social justice scholarship is somehow absent from journals dedicated to curriculum studies and its contingent fields of study. Rather, it is an acknowledgement that it is now high time for a journal that expressly attends to questions of social justice from as wide a variety, and is as international in perspectives, as possible. This understanding is also reflected in our editorial board, several of whom are also editors of journals that address issues of social justice, a sign of our co-commitment to this work and of our appreciation for the need for a journal specifically dedicated to the intersection of curriculum and social justice.

To these ends, in order to better document the journal's aim and scope, the editors will curate first four issues of *CSJ*. This, our inaugural issue, is under the stewardship of Boni Wozolek and focuses on questions of curricular presences and absences. Theodora Regina Berry will edit our second issue in the fall of 2015 that addresses the wide variety of possible interpretations for critical race feminisms. Walter S. Gershon will edit our third issue (Spring 2016) that attends to multisensual understandings of social justice and we will edit the fall 2016 issue together, an issue that will focus on constructions of social justice from a multiplicity of (nation/state/group/etc.) perspectives.

Submissions for Volume 3, Issue 1 (Spring 2016) will be accepted on a continual and rolling basis until February 1, 2016, with a decision by March 14, 2016. *CSJ* takes full advantage of its online, open access format and encourages publication in both textual and non-textual medias (documentaries, soundscapes, graphic novels, etc.). Issues may be in any language with an understanding that they also be translated into English to

reach as wide an audience as possible while honoring contributors' linguistic choices/preferences (submitted/preferred language will be first, followed by English translations). Authors retain the rights to their work in *CSJ* and are free to use their work in future publications provided they acknowledge its initial publication in *CSJ*. Instructions for document preparation can be found on the journal's website, www.ijcsj.org.

Our journal also has two interactive sections that we will curate, an area to post curricular narratives of social justice and/or stories of inequity and a section we call "intellectual click bait." The narratives section is an experiment based on the many such stories we see across our various social media feeds: An opportunity to see whether our community wishes to have a central, searchable area of such narratives for activist, awareness, and research purposes. Intellectual click bait is precisely what it purports to be, an ongoing set of previously published works that reflect the journal's theme updated randomly but not infrequently. Should you have a piece you would like to be recirculated, please contact the editors at csj.editor@gmail.com. Last but not least, a final thank you is in order to both Mindy Hamann, now a senior at Medina High School (OH) who designed our logo and inaugural journal cover and to Murat Dagistan, a doctoral candidate at Kent State University who designed and curated our website, both of whom can also be contacted through the journal's website, www.ijcsj.org.

References

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