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On Being the Editor of a Journal: Can I Count the Ways?

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As the editor of a journal, I have a number of freedoms and opportunities in crafting the editorial and in shaping the work of a particular edition. Yes, this is a kind of power, I recognize that, and I work hard not to let the “power of this place” get to my head. I get to choose what I want to write about, especially if the particular edition is an open call, and even if it were not an open call, I still have the responsibility of determining which focus, slant or direction I would take given the content of the articles accepted for that particular edition. There is a great luxury in having the freedom to determine what to write and how to write an editorial. No one is breathing down your neck on how to shape or present a viewpoint or how to organize the piece. Ultimately, the buck stops with you. It is therefore a great privilege and opportunity to be a journal editor. As editor of *Ubiquity – Praxis*, I hope that I am making a very strong effort not to abuse this privilege and opportunity. What is it that I think I am supposed to do? Some questions that I think about include, *Does this editorial contribute to pushing the field in different directions? Or am I just talking loudly about what others have already said and merely endorsing the status quo?* I think about what new insights and intersections can be brought to this edition and I wonder about what ways of writing and/or presenting the editorial would make it more accessible and intriguing to readers. For example, should I use pictures? Should I use spoken word or poetry, or just a plain essay? Sometimes I have to do additional research as one of the articles may be using a framework with which I am unfamiliar. The additional research may also be compelled by a direction that I want to pursue and may need some references for—it all adds to my learning and growth. Sometimes, I may need to talk with others, as I consider how to further a particular perspective to enrich the edition. For example, I could interview a knowledgeable person from a given field. I did this with the prominent visual artist, Ms. K. Joy

Ballard Peters. I was so happy to talk with her and learn from her varied and rich lived experiences and wisdom. See my editorial for Spring/Summer 2018. Nevertheless, above all, I cherish the opportunity to be creative and open-minded. I love breathing the fresh air and thinking outside the box. It is exhilarating and most of all, liberating! Moreover, as one of the few non-European editors of an educational journal, I bring my transnational intercultural teacher educator identities of being an African descended cisgender woman from the Bahamas who did graduate studies in Canada, and who lived in Asia and now the United States, with me. I endeavor to stand for criticality, equity, and social justice in my actions and not just my beliefs. This means that in my work as editor, I exhibit these characteristics and attributes in my writing and in my actions. My editorials need to identify inclusivity and upliftment for all while at the same time recognizing those who have been historically marginalized and disenfranchised. This orientation compels me to think outside the proverbial “box,” outside of the “status quo,” outside of the “ivory tower,” and into the highways and byways of those who are often made invisible and reduced to nothingness and being inconsequential. Using the privileges that I have as journal editor and the responsibilities that I have for high standards as well as with an awareness of my biases and subjectivities, I must constantly challenge myself and my ways of seeing and being as I operate in this space.

I take this job very seriously because I want to see what contributions I can make as editor. This contribution is not only in the editorial that accompanies the articles in a journal edition. I have the responsibility of helping to shape potential articles through the process of peer review and after they have been peer-reviewed. How much time should I invest in pushing an article to publication? All the time that is necessary if the article has merit and can benefit from “enrichment.” I have the responsibility of determining after all the edits are in if the paper is fully

acceptable or not, but the most important aspect that I like is looking at an article from the beginning to the end and the way it has been transformed by the reviewers and my input. I am always pleased at the end because an article is so much richer from the feedback received by all of us. Thank you to our reviewers for this edition and all the editions in the past and those yet to come. Our journal could not survive without you.

In this edition, we have two articles that spark my imagination and thinking about exciting possibilities and experiences for learning and teaching. The first is Kathryn Dixon's "Google Tour Builder as a Platform for Social Studies Engagement." While I have been aware of some of the possibilities of Google Maps, I have not taught with them, and so I greatly enjoyed working with this piece and learning more about the enactment of Google Tour Builder, which takes you to other worlds without ever leaving your home! Dixon used Google Tour Builder to create virtual fieldtrips for his teacher candidates. The experience afforded the teacher candidates an opportunity to build on their knowledge of the Holocaust as well as to provide a model for their future teaching.

Our second article by Mary Frances Rice was very intriguing to me. Her article, "Projections of Identity: How Technological Devices Become Us and Why It Matters in ELA Teacher Education," leads us on a trip that embodies the use of devices in creating one's professional identity and the tensions that play out in the psychosocial in technology use and the socio-material. Rice uses her own teaching experiences with the ubiquitous overhead projector to explain and explore and connect our professional identities and the equipment/technologies we choose to use or ignore. One difficult question asked by Rice is: How does one build a relationship with something that hangs from the ceiling and that one cannot touch?

Rice and Dixon's articles, take me to unknown and unexplored territories professionally. I have never thought about using Google Maps, and neither have I thought about the technologies I use or do not use, much less about how these are both connected to my identity as a teacher. I thought about my own secondary school teaching days with battered, well-worn books and dog-eared pages that can turn, the whiteboard and blackboard with tools to write and erase. Does PowerPoint count as updated technology?

I started this editorial by talking about the freedoms and opportunities and privileges of being a journal editor. In the opening paragraph I stated, "Yes, this is a kind of power, I recognize that, and I work hard not to let the 'power of this place' get to my head." I am glad that I wrote that because as editor, I also need to admit when I am frail, unknowing and challenged. These two articles have given me reason to stop and think more deeply about my technology use at the personal, psychological level and at the professional level in working with the next generation of teachers. What messages do I convey? What will teaching and learning look like in the next decade when we consider how educators embody the technologies they use or choose not to use? What can editorials look like if we too were to incorporate technologies into this aspect of publishing (or perishing)?

Reference

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