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The Tenth Anniversary of Ubiquity, the Journal of Literature, Literacy and the Arts –

PRAXIS Re-examined

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Ten years ago, my fellow editors, Ewa McGrail (Research), Patrick McGrail (Creative Works), Gladys Yarbrough (Community News) and I founded our strands of *Ubiquity, the Journal of Literature, Literacy and the Arts*. As the founding editor of Praxis, I am very pleased that we have made it thus far. It has not been a smooth path and while there is still so much work needed to propel our journal forward, I want to recognize all those authors and reviewers who have helped us to get to this point. To our authors, we are grateful that you trusted us to be a home for your work. To our reviewers, we are thankful that you walked with us to conduct quality reviews and give feedback to our authors. To our graduate assistants, Thomas Jolly (PhD), Andrea Lofgren (PhD), Timothy Hicks (PhD), Srividya Ravipati, and Taylor Ohlstrom, thank you for working with us to keep the nuts and bolts of this journal oiled and operating especially as we faced technology challenges. I also want to recognize my Associate Editor, Dr. Ruchi Bhatnagar for her support with five issues of Praxis (Fall/Winter 2021 to 2023).

As we continue to get the word out about who we are and what we stand for, I wish to reflect on two core questions, how do we teach teachers for a better world and how do we reflect on our teaching for a stronger teaching force? I do this by revisiting the descriptions of our types of submissions that were written and updated over the last ten years on the Ubiquity website. I propose a way forward to move Praxis to the next level.

What is Praxis? The Original.

The meeting ground of theory and practice, praxis is a place with the potential to be transformative. It is not just thinking or reflecting about our actions; it is taking further action as a result of our thinking on the action that was taken. In this way, the two are seen as acting upon each other as if in a *dialectal dance*. *Praxis* provides an opportunity to acknowledge, explore, celebrate, question, and extend the range and variety of educational practices, including the

challenges and engagements for the growth and development of our local, national, and international communities for the betterment of all humankind.

We welcome papers and reports from PK-12 and post-secondary educators in teaching and learning contexts as well as those that discuss policies. We welcome works that acknowledge the joys, triumphs, and challenges of teaching and learning in traditional institutional settings. We invite the following types of papers and reports from teachers and their learners:

The Revision: What is *Critical* PRAXIS?

Critical PRAXIS is the meeting ground of theory and practice where extant power structures are challenged along with other taken for granted ways of being. *Critical PRAXIS* is a potentially radical place to up-end the status quo. It is not just thinking or reflecting about our actions; it is extending and maybe changing future actions because of our thinking about what was previously done. In this way, the two are seen acting upon each other as if in a *dialectal dance with a future for something even more radical and critical*. *Critical PRAXIS* provides an opportunity to acknowledge, explore, celebrate, question, and extend the range and variety of educational practices, including the challenges and engagements for the growth and development of our local, regional, national, and international communities for the betterment of all humankind. Critical thinking begs us for example, to question for whom I am teaching, who is represented or not represented, and whose histories and ways of being are marginalized and/or centralized in my teaching.

We welcome papers and reports from PK-12 and post-secondary educators in local, national, regional and international teaching and learning contexts as well as those that discuss policies. We welcome works that acknowledge the joys, triumphs, and challenges of teaching

and learning in traditional and non-traditional institutional settings. We invite the following types of papers and reports from teachers and their learners:

Reflexive Journals – The Original

Reflexive journals are designed to capture your thinking, challenges and triumphs as you go through your teaching day or week. Although designed with novice teachers in mind, anyone can prepare a submission of this type. Details should include an introduction and explanation of why you felt compelled to write a journal, entries from the journal, and a closing section describing what it all means. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

The Revision - Reflexive Journals

Reflexive journals are designed to capture your thinking, challenges and triumphs as you go through your teaching day, week, semester, or school year. Although designed with novice teachers in mind, any educator can prepare a submission of this type. Details should include an introduction and explanation of why you felt compelled to write a journal, entries from the journal, and a closing section describing what it all means. In other words, theorizing your journal writing. Particularly pertinent to **Critical PRAXIS** is the critical reflection on your growth and development as a critical educator and how the journal reflections have impacted your teaching and curriculum. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

Creative Reflections on Teaching Life – The Original

Poems, dramatic voice pieces, and anecdotes are creative responses to an educational experience or teaching event that can enrich our lives as educators. Share the creative piece and provide background information such as where, when, and why you created it. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

The Revision - Creative Reflections on Teaching Life

Poems, spoken word, choral reading, dramatic pieces, drawings, pictures, and other artistic expressions are creative responses to an educational experience or teaching event that can enrich our lives as educators. Share the creative piece and provide background information such as the context, when, why and how you created it. Include your reflections, rationalizing and theorizing of what this work does for you and your learners. What recommendations could be offered for other educators who might want to adopt such a process? **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

Innovative Lessons – The Original

What are your innovative teaching and learning ideas? Units and lesson plans are the life blood of teaching and describe in detail what happens when we challenge and engage students by drawing upon multiliteracies in meaningful ways. Submissions should include the school's context and a rationale for the unit or lesson along with grade and subject level, goals, and objectives. Procedures should include introduction, body and conclusion with all the steps so that readers can carry out your ideas. If presenting an entire unit, provide an overview in table format of the goals, objectives, and skills that you will teach over the period of time. Units of work should run for a minimum of three weeks to a semester and should engage in theme-based, authentic learning experiences. Include a section on assessments and accommodations for students with special learning needs. Finally, conclude with reflections on the lesson or unit, including recommendations. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

The Revision - Innovative Lessons

How do you grow and develop as a critical educator? What innovative teaching and learning ideas do you have? Units and lesson plans are the life blood of teaching and describe in

detail what happens when we challenge and engage students by drawing upon interdisciplinary, intersectional multiliteracies in critically and culturally meaningful ways. Submissions should include the school's context and a rationale for the unit or lesson along with grade and subject level, goals, and objectives. Procedures should include an introduction, body, and conclusion with all the steps so that readers can carry out the ideas. If presenting an entire unit, provide an overview in table format of the goals, objectives, and skills that you will teach over the period. Units of work could run for a minimum of three weeks to a semester and could draw on multiliteracies, critical intersectional theme-based, authentic learning experiences. Include a section on assessments and accommodations for students with special learning needs. Finally, conclude with reflections on your development as a critical educator, the lesson or unit creation and teaching, successes, challenges and recommendations. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

Instructional Technologies Applications – The Original

Instructional technologies applications are short teaching ideas reporting on the use of an app, social media, website, or any new technology. All sites and mediums must be cost free. These reports should include sections describing the technology and how to use it as well as feedback and recommendations. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

The Revision - Instructional Technologies Applications

Instructional technologies applications are reports on teaching ideas that incorporate the use of an app, social media, website, or any new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI). All sites and mediums must be cost free and available to the public. These reports should include sections describing the technology, its purpose, a critical review of how you used it with your

learners as well as feedback for the designers and recommendations for fellow educators. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

Travel Abroad Itineraries and Insights – The Original

Education-based study abroad itineraries are reports and reflections on a study abroad experience that you have had with educators and/or students. Reports should include where I went, when, why and with whom. In addition to the details of the daily itinerary reflections on the experience, the report should include recommendations for future study abroad and students' feedback. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

The Revision – Critical Intercultural Travel Abroad Itineraries and Insights

Education-based study abroad itineraries are reports and reflections on a study abroad experience that you have had with educators and/or students. Critical Reports could include the purpose of the trip and why this itinerary was developed to support the critical intercultural development of learners. Provide details along with pictures, maps and charts on the location, dates travelled, and information about the travelers. In addition to details of the daily itinerary, provide reflections on the experiences, how the learners were prepared for the trip, and how the itinerary supported the critical reflexive intercultural development of the learners. Give recommendations for future study abroad along with learners' feedback. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

Opinion Pieces – The Original

Your opinion about educational matters is very important to the life of our local, national and international community of educators. Your submission may be in response to anything in education that provokes your reflection. Be sure to give the context and background to your submission. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

The Revision - Opinion Pieces

Your opinions about critical educational matters are very important to the life of our local, national and international community of educators. Your submission may be in response to anything in education that provokes your reflection about inequities and unfairness in teaching and learning such as government policies, and/or the actions of administrators, teachers, community members, students and parents. Be sure to give the context and background of your submission. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

Reading Reflections – the Original

Reading reflections may include (1) Book club reports demonstrating the dynamic vitality of teachers as professionals with agency to organize, support and sustain their professional identity; or (2) Reports of reading lists reflecting the decisions that educators make about what students should be taught. All reflections should include a description of the setting and context; the agenda for the meeting(s), or purpose for the reading list; and reflections on the process with implications for teachers and/or students. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

The Revision – Critical Reading Reflections

Critical reading reflections may include: (1) Book club reports demonstrating the dynamic vitality of teachers as professionals with agency to organize, support and sustain their professional identity and critical development; or (2) Reports of reading lists reflecting the critical decisions that educators make about what students should/should not be exposed to or taught. All reflections should include a description of the setting, the participants and context; the agenda for the meeting(s), purpose for the reading list; and reflections on the processes enacted

with implications for teachers and/or students and community members. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

Professional Development Reports – The Original

Professional development reports describe the transformative experiences you have had in learning to be a better teacher. Begin this section with the context and why you attended this professional development. Describe what took place with your reflections. Give your recommendations on the experiences and discuss the applications to your teaching and learning context. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

The Revision - Professional Development Reports

Professional development reports describe the transformative experiences educators may have had in learning to be better and more critically conscious and aware teachers. Begin this section with the context and why you engaged in this professional development. Describe what took place, accompanied by your reflections. Give your recommendations on the experiences and discuss the applications to your teaching and learning context. How has this experience helped you to be a more critically conscious and aware teacher? How has this experience impacted your teaching practices and students' learning? **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

Teachers' Study Group Agendas and Reports – The Original

Teacher study group agendas and reports are meant to demonstrate the dynamic vitality of teachers as professionals with agency to organize, support and sustain their professional identity as educators. Details should include a description of the setting and context of the study group; the agenda for the meeting(s), and reflections on what took place; a closing paragraph on what this means for teachers as professionals. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

The Revision - Teachers' Study Group Agendas and Reports

Teacher study group agendas and reports are meant to demonstrate the dynamic vitality of teachers as professionals with agency to organize, support and sustain their critical professional identity as educators. Details should include a description of the context, group, setting, mission, vision and goals of the study group; the agenda for the meeting(s), and reflections on what took place; a closing paragraph on what this means for teachers as professionals. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

Program Reports – Original

Program reports are detailed descriptions of the programs in your schools along with examples of their successes and challenges. Your program report should include a background description of the program, including the number of years in operation, how and why it was developed, how the program was carried out and evidence of evaluation. Include also examples of successes, challenges, and recommendations for future development. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

The Revision - Program Reports

Program reports are detailed descriptions of the programs in your schools along with examples of their successes and challenges. Your program reports should include background information and description of the school's location and demographics, including the number of years in operation, how and why the program was developed, how it was implemented, and developed across the years. Provide evidence of evaluation. What critical statements could be made about the program? Include, also, examples of success, challenges, goals and recommendations for future development. **Length:** 10-15 double-spaced pages with references.

The Way Forward

The editors of Ubiquity selected the pinwheel to symbolize our work. Particularly salient for us was the interconnectedness and the colorfulness across the rich legacies and heritages of literature, literacy and the arts. We relished the exciting possibilities of maintaining the curiosity of a child by blowing on a pinwheel to make it spin in fascination to see the different colors as they circulate. Today, we still love the pinwheel and what it evokes, the non-static nature of what we do and the interconnectedness of our subject areas and of all of us in making the world go round and round. For Praxis, the editors agreed upon the bridge as the force for connecting theory and practice to take us from old vistas to new vistas. I still love the bridge metaphor, and I am enamored with the possibilities bridges evoke. Let us all try to build stronger and more sustainable bridges in the work we do by committing more intentionally and explicitly to *critical* bridge building in our pedagogical pursuits. We teach for a better world when we are cognizant of the critical sociocultural and historical contexts of our work and when we engage in critical praxis that is reflexive about our pedagogical practices.

Let us be reminded that (1) our work is political (e.g. Boyd et al., 2006); (2) we have a legacy of a deficit view of marginalized students (e.g. Bartolomé, 2009); (3) past and current injustices and oppressions are still with us (e.g. Boutte, 1999; Pewewardy et al., 2022); and that (4) inequities exist in how we teach and the opportunities that we afford different groups of children (Rafalow, 2020). There is a need for a more *Critical* PRAXIS that is not afraid to peel back the layered and deeply ingrained roadblocks to building bridges that can transform our educational practices, heal the wounded soul and liberate our colonized mindsets from the hegemonic impediments and impositions of patriarchy, ethnocentrism, racism, sexism, linguisticism, ableism, capitalism and neoliberalism. I am hoping that the next ten years of this

work in Praxis, that is, *Critical* PRAXIS, will bring us closer to the local, national, regional and international *beloved community* envisioned by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King. Let us commit to this with renewed vigor as the new year, 2025 approaches and beyond.

Helping us celebrate our tenth year are our authors, Marshall A. George, Melanie Shoffner, Mark A. Lewis and Ashley S. Boyd. Their article, *Pedagogy as Perspective: Exploring Purpose and Practice for Young Adult Literature with Teacher Candidates* gives us a beautiful chance to reflect on how we teach and what we as teacher educators do in our classes. Coming together to discuss our pedagogical approaches can only strengthen us and our teacher candidates and their students because we learn from and with each other. I am deeply appreciative too, of the context of the class, *Young Adult Literature*, because with so many books being banned, we need to be more intentional about strengthening our own support systems within the academy to do the necessary work with our teacher candidates. Bravo to these teacher educators for taking the time to talk, write and reflect on their own pedagogical practices. Bravo!! We invite more papers like this.

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