

## Editorial Introduction

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This inaugural issue of *Cultural and Pedagogical Inquiry* heralds what we hope will become active debates and topical exchanges that pertain to the important intersections of education, culture and pedagogy. The journal, of course, has physical properties, and that is what you are seeing now, but we must admit, it also draws some learning and general intellectual sustainability beyond those from a meta-practical space that may not be as visible. Indeed, the name, ‘cultural and pedagogical inquiry’ has temporal announcements that speak about the shifting terrain in the way we perceive, analyze and use educational contexts. There were times when the disjuncture between the cultural and the pedagogical was heavily pronounced. In other times, the conventional constructions of culture were so static, that it might have been falsely presumed that there wasn’t much about pedagogy that is cultural. As we know now, there have been extensive and ground-shifting scholarly introductions into the study of the cultural terrain in the past 30 or so years. So much so that cultural studies should have been the fastest growing social science discipline in the last little while. Indeed, with very few university departments in the North America, for example, teaching cultural studies, with a limited number of scholars systematically studying it, and with even lesser number of graduate students choosing it for their doctoral programs before the 1980s, it might have been difficult for anyone to envision how the field will explosively grow in the few decades that followed. Yet, the journal is not simply focused on the general interplays of culture and pedagogy, it extends beyond that and intends to accentuate the very active spaces that inform the overall nature of the interactive conceptualizations and praxes that inform these and related areas of educational and social research.

Before the liberation of cultural studies as a fully fledged area, its scholars were mostly scattered in few social sciences departments including Anthropology, Sociology, and Language and Literary studies. In the way culture was located in, especially, in anthropology and sociology, the context was not well endowed with respect to how it was conceptually approached, explained, analyzed, and discursively-praxically operationalized. The reasons were multiple, but the one that draws most the attention of the journal’s editors pertains to the historical development of cultural studies in these disciplines. To a larger extent in anthropology, but still to a sizable dimension in sociology, the explanatory platforms of culture were mostly presented as specific to the lives of colonized populations. And with colonial social science categories not technically or meta-technically positive about the lives of Indigenous peoples, the study of culture was usually limited to the static life descriptions that affirmed for Western audiences the nature of the disinterested lives of the people concerned. Even the celebrated works of

Margaret Mead, Franz Boas, Levi-Strauss and Clifford Geertz, although they may have given us more descriptions, did not fully save themselves (with perhaps, Clifford Geertz less so) from the totalizing gaze that fixed the lives of the natives.

The reason for the above narration on culture is not accidental. Indeed, this journal and the new scholarly transactions it would convey should be seen as an ongoing important project that is attempting to redeem meaningful, dynamic and agency-rich cultural categories to the colonized, including the editors of the enterprise. Here, a counter-argument may be that culture has already been rescued from its anthropological store shelf; as such, one need not engage any new reconstruction schizophrenics about it. But the story is more complicated than that, and among the journal's intentions is to contribute more to the still needed deconstructions and reconstructions of the pedagogic-cultural terrain. Indeed, in these times of neo-liberalized public spaces, the marginality of culture, especially in the educational terrain is still of utmost importance. The tactical admission of multicultural education, then isolating it to the corners of 'you are here, so don't worry, be happy' did not change in educational sciences. As such, a more robust enfranchisement of culture in spaces of teaching, learning and politically and socio-culturally achieving, are needed. It is in this ascending perspective of both the cultural and the pedagogical, therefore, that the three articles in this first issue deal with topics that are, one way or another, attached to a better understanding of the locations of people in different spaces that either help or hinder their existential, educational or overall socio-cultural well-being.

In the first article, 'Decolonizing Diaspora: Whose Traditional Land Are you On?' Celia Haig-Brown considers the possibility of decolonizing discourses of diaspora, by posing the central question that asks, not only where do people of the diaspora come *from*, but where have they come *to*? As she notes, in North America, nations have been superimposed on Indigenous lands and peoples through colonization and domination. Taking this relation seriously in the context of discourses of race, Indigeneity and diaspora within university classrooms interrupts business as usual and promises a richer analysis of one particular similarity amongst diasporic, as well as settler, groups in North America with possible implications beyond this context. In short, the author asks each reader to respond to the question, "Whose traditional land are you on?" as a step in the long process of decolonizing our countries and our lives. While part of the focus for this paper is on theorizing diaspora, there are obvious implications for all people living in a colonized country. Drawing primarily on three pedagogical strategies and events arising from them, Celia Haig-Brown takes up some of the possibilities for theory-building that they suggest. Reflections on courses taught, student feedback and texts from Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark* to James Clifford's "Indigenous Articulations" ground the discussion.

In the second article, 'Changing Students, Changing Teaching: Understanding the Dynamics of Adaption to a changing Student population', Yatta Kanu discusses how, as global migrations increase, educators search for effective ways of meeting the learning needs of diverse student populations. She explores this challenge in a study conducted at the high school level where concerns about student diversity and subject matter intersect sharply. Using a case study approach to understand the dynamics of teachers' adaptations

to changing student populations, she documents adaptations made by Math and English teachers in a large Canadian city in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In addition, she examines the goals, conceptions of subject matter, instructional practices, and views about student learning held by Math and English teachers; the teachers contrast as to whether they did or did not reconceptualize and change their practices when faced with new populations of students, specifically African refugee students. Moreover, she examines ways in which the teachers' school contexts, for example, their subject departments, facilitated or inhibited change in their teaching practices. She concludes that different patterns of goals, conceptions of subject matter, and beliefs about students characterize teachers who adapt and those who do not. In the light of these findings Kanu urges teacher education programs to reconsider their exclusive focus on multicultural competence and take these patterns/elements into account in the preparation of teachers for working successfully with changing student populations.

In the third article, 'Racializing Immigrant Professionals in an Employment Preparation ESL Program', Yan Guo summarizes a case study of the ways in which a specific English as a Second Language (ESL) program prepares immigrant professionals for employment in an urban Canadian labour market. Data for the study were collected from interviews with immigrant professionals, administrators, ESL teachers, a career workshop facilitator, and from classroom observations of the ESL program in an immigrant-serving organization in western Canada. Using the perspectives of critical multiculturalism, critical multilingualism, and Foucault's "governmentality," Guo reveals in her study how the ESL program focuses on presentability and employability of immigrants through such processes as acquiring accentless proficiency in English, changing one's names, and adapting to Canadian linguistic and cultural norms. As such, she notes, the ESL program puts the pressure on immigrants to assimilate, without promoting changes in the larger Canadian society. In addition, the roots of the dominance of English language and sociocultural norms are not questioned in the program. At the end, the author discusses major educational implications that pertain to the important finding of this study. Besides the three articles, there is also a review of Teresa Wilson-Strong's book, *Bringing Memory Forward: Storied Remembrance in Social Justice Education with Teachers* (2008) by Ingrid Johnston.

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