A Note from the JULTR Editorial Team

As we sat sequestered in our homes during the global pandemic of 2020, we pondered how these uncertain times will impact urban students and schools. As parents and families have their children at home, they are able to witness remote learning and the difficulties involved in schooling their own children from home. In these times, we are finally witnessing respect for teachers growing. The fact that many parents cannot fathom teaching 30 students with varying learning styles in the same classroom for an extended period of time, many differently abled, and coming to school with various ACE scores, may result in a reassessment of the value of teachers and of the teaching profession in general. We can hope.

But, we must concern ourselves with issues of equity that have made themselves ever-more-present during the pandemic. We must continue to advocate for urban students and schools, by collectively resisting teaching children using one-size-fits-all curricula, pre-packaged curricula, and drill-and-kill mandates with the sole purpose of increasing scores on standardized tests. Teachers must, especially now, band together to insist upon the value of their own knowledge to create curricula, in conjunction with their students, for the purpose of empowerment and freedom. We must join together to fight against outside entities, business, and politics from encroaching on the education of our children in the interest of capitalism and authoritarianism.

As we complied this volume, cities across the US and the world united in protest over the murder-by-police of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. Darnella Frazier, a 17-year-old citizen journalist recorded and shared this brutal act, which led to outrage throughout Minneapolis and the world. Young first-time political activists took to the streets in the midst of COVID-19 to protest police brutality, overt racism, and state-sanctioned violence.

The classroom pushed into the world and our homes. With the help of social media, citizen journalist-activists recorded peaceful protests, infiltration from white supremacist groups, and police engaging in violence against citizens simply enacting their first amendment right to free speech. We do not argue that there were not instances of violence on the part of citizens, but we do argue that the great majority of these uprisings were peaceful—engaging in collective action for long overdue racial justice.
As teacher educators, do we think about the material conditions of our students? Do we think about the systems that perpetuate poverty, racism, and disenfranchisement? Do we engage in these epistemological discussions in our teacher education programs? We are beginning to study Trauma Informed Care and Social Emotional Learning in the United States, but these are relatively new lines of inquiry. Teacher education programs are slow to critically question systems, as most teacher candidates have been successful within said systems and come from white and middle class homes. Now is the time to question all of the systems. The time is now.

As we read the articles accepted for this, the “revival” issue of the Journal of Urban Learning, Teaching, and Research, we saw hope for the future in the words of teachers seeing their students as whole, making spaces for Students of Color, and doing the hard work that goes into teaching new teachers about the realities of teaching children different than themselves. By bringing the work of these revolutionary voices to the fore, we play a small piece of our part to build the path toward a more equitable experience for all children in school, toward the education that all children, regardless of status, ability, background, or geography, deserve. We hope that you find the hope in these stories as we have and take the lessons illustrated here into your work.

Thank you,

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