

FOREWORD

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I am amazed at how frequently and passionately I see head-nodding around me when I share my experiences encountering some of the most challenging instances of resistance to collectivizing around anti-oppressive educational advocacy that come not only from those who claim that there is no need for such work, but sometimes even moreso from those who agree that there is such need but who insist their way is the only way. The irony of such resistance becomes clearer the more that we assert our expertise as a reason to retreat from that which lies at the heart of connecting in ever more deep and profound ways, namely, the vulnerability of outing the partialities and gaps of our work about which we may not even be aware. That is, only when we allow ourselves to be vulnerable around the gaps in our expertise can we relate more deeply, connect more substantively, and grow more honestly, but such vulnerability is suppressed the more that we feel the need to assert our expertise as the grounds for authorizing our work, or vision, or intervention.

When we apply this to teaching and learning, and especially to the movement for critical pedagogy, we see that its call to illuminate and then dismantle the ideologies and systems that legitimize and

sustain any number of injustices historically and today must always turn inward, rattling and reframing even that which we as critical pedagogues presume to know or assert. Such paradoxes do not weaken our attempts to raise awareness and act collectively for social change, but rather, lie at the very heart of what makes such attempts pedagogically forceful and imbued with capacity for political change—and such paradoxes are beautifully laid bare, mined, and applied in the articles in this special issue.

Seeding these articles was the 8th International Conference on Education and Social Justice, held October 5-7, 2018, in Honolulu, Hawai‘i. The conference brought together scholars and educators from across Hawai‘i, the United States, and the world to share research and resources and to build networks and other collectives for advancing equity and justice in education. The range of cultural/political contexts and conceptual/transformational frameworks in the 100+ scholarly presentations provided fertile ground for disconcerting conversations and collaborative theorizing, spanning a range of disciplinary and institutional spaces, and interwoven with perspectives and examples of local educators and scholars and students whose voices helped to ground our work in the here and now of the gathering. Several presenters focused on theoretical foundations of critical pedagogy, while others analyzed such pedagogy in practice, or its impact, or contradictions, or extensions, or applications, all while thinking skeptically and/or artfully about prevailing rhetoric regarding what counts and does not count as “critical” or “pedagogy,” or the value or lack thereof of knowledge produced from their joining.

As the conference organizer, I know that I and many of the conference participants are grateful for the vision and leadership of co-editors Jody Luna and Vidya Shah that built on the event to produce this special issue, which is a brilliant and most timely intervention in critical pedagogy and anti-oppressive education. The range of topics in these articles gives us a taste of the breadth and depth of presentations and conversations at the conference: from scholarly inquiry and troubling notions of self, to teacher education and teacher collectivization and where they do and do not connect with community, as well as from the pedagogy of history to the history

of organizing as pedagogy. The contributors to this volume show us how to dive into the paradoxes of critical pedagogy, and in so doing, into the paradoxes at the very heart of social-justice education. We owe much gratitude to the contributors; the collaborators who made their projects possible; the conference participants who deepened their analyses; the editors of this special issue, who brought together these articles into a provocative whole; the editors of this journal for amplifying this intervention; and now to you, the readers, who are invited to engage with the ideas in these articles as we collectively build a stronger movement for equity and justice in education.

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