



Reflections

Editors' Reflections

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“Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.” Paulo Freire

Social justice has always been at the core of adult education practice. For many this component of social justice education within the field was what attracted them to practice adult education in the first place. Today, not unlike yesterday, adult educators confront inequity of all types.

Social justice violations are at the core of unrest, as evident in the revolutions and instability in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, and across the globe – rampant corruption, civil rights violations, and mass incarceration; unequal access to education and employment, ethnic genocide, and women’s rights violations plague societies. Adult educators have accepted the charge to expose, investigate, and trouble the inequities of the past and present that permeate all facets of our lives and have long engaged in social movements of social justice through the Civil Rights Movement in the USA, the Antigonish Movement in Nova Scotia and Liberation Theology and Literacy Movements in Brazil to name just a few. And today, we see adult education practices at play in countries in Africa such as

Tunisia's government reconstruction following their revolution. Social justice and adult education are inextricably linked. This is what makes our field unique from other fields of education.

Dialogues in Social Justice: An Adult Education Journal (DSJ) was started to raise the visibility of the field in this critical area, promote the continued significance of a social justice agenda, and contribute to the further preparation of adult educators who desire to address the urgent social justice issues of our day. We invite you to embark on a journey with us toward social justice through adult education.

The theme of this inaugural issue is *Linking the Past, Present, and Future of Social Justice in Adult Education*. The challenges, failures, and victories of the past are the building blocks of the present that influence the vision for the future. In linking the past, present and future we combine the wisdom of old with new knowledge to envision a future of hope and change. *Dialogues in Social Justice* provides a forum for senior scholars and new scholars to engage with and learn from each other. *DSJ* desires to advance the cause for social justice on a national and international level through prose and arts-based work that lend themselves to portraying and challenging injustice. In this inaugural issue, senior scholars lay a foundation for our movement forward through reflections on the role of adult education in promoting social justice - where we have been, where we are at, and where we need to go. This inaugural issue is comprised of reflections from noted adult educators who in both their practice and scholarship demonstrate understanding of the important role adult education plays in advancing social justice within our contemporary society.

The editors of *Dialogues in Social Justice: An Adult Education Journal* wish to thank everyone who provided feedback and encouragement during the development phases of this work and all of those who enthusiastically answered the call to serve on the review board or to register as a subscriber to the journal. We are excited about your future contributions. The originators of this journal, Dr. Dionne M. Rosser-Mims and Dr. Lisa R. Merriweather, extend a special thank you to Drs. Mervin E. Chisholm, Joni Schwartz, and Brendaly Drayton who agreed to work alongside us as we etched out the vision for this unique work.

We would not have been able to launch the journal in as timely a fashion without the untiring efforts of our journal's managing editor, Priscilla Baddouth, and copyeditor, Monique Nicoleau. Their talents were accessible to us as a result of the generosity of our colleague, Dr. Richard Lambert. Thank you Rich for all of your support. We also thank Somaly Kim Wu and the Technology and Digital Strategy staff at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte which provides the infrastructure and platform for this compelling work.

DSJ stands on the shoulders of giants in the form of journals such as *Adult Education Quarterly*, *Adult Learning*, *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning*, among others that predate it and scholars such as Talmadge C. Guy, Scipio A. J. Colin, III, Stephen Brookfield, Juanita Johnson-Bailey, Vanessa Sheared, Ian Baptiste, the late Phyllis Cunningham, the late Elizabeth Peterson, among others. We hope that this inaugural issue inspires you to become or continue working as agents of social change and to engage the courageous conversations and actions that will define *DSJ* as a hallmark within the discourse of social justice and a staple within the intellectual curiosity of adult education.

Reference

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Biography



Lisa R. Merriweather

Associate Professor of Adult Education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte

She teaches on various topics related to adult learning, sociology and philosophy of adult education, and qualitative research.



Dionne M. Rosser-Mims

Associate professor of Adult Education and assistant department chair within the Department of Leadership Development and Professional Studies at Troy University

Her main areas of teaching and research include adult learning and development, higher education administration, and leadership studies.



Mervin E. Chisholm

Manager/Coordinator of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

Mervin E. Chisholm is a specialist in adult, higher and community education. He currently serves as Manager/Coordinator of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at the University of the West Indies (UWI) Mona Campus, Jamaica. He also teaches courses in Adult and Higher Education in the UWI School of Education.



Joni Schwartz

Associate professor and social activist scholar in the Department of Humanities at the City University of New York - LaGuardia Community College

Her research interests include Critical Race Theory, Black males and learning engagement, mass incarceration, STEM mentoring, and high school equivalency.



Brendaly Drayton

Guided Study Groups Coordinator and Penn State Learning/ Adult Education instructor at The Pennsylvania State University

Her areas of interest are adult literacy, African American men, identity, and narrative analysis. Within social justice research her interests are educational equity; societal factors that shape identities and the access and outcomes of education.