

**FOREWORD: THE UBIQUITY OF WARS  
AND THE “GOOD DANGER” OF PRAXIS**

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For a long time, great thinkers like Noam Chomsky and Paulo Freire, among many others, have always been viewed as “dangerous” and even more so in recent days and years. Both are illustrious thinkers and actors who are considered radicals in their own ways, given their defiance against the “banking system” of education; while both men simultaneously pinpoint the “paradoxes of democracy” that hamper creativity and independent thinking of students, educators, administrators, and leaders. Chomsky and Freire have dedicated their work that cultivates the power of language as a means for educational emancipation, intellectual freedom, and social empowerment within overarching universal principles of humanity, justice, and equity. For them, language is the currency for understanding the world realities and the essence of what it means to be human free from bias or prejudice. As such, education should be grounded in emancipation rather than oppression, enlightenment rather than ignorance, and empathy rather than apathy. More importantly, education should be praxis-based in which learners and educators are not brainwashed but constantly brain-triggered to freely dialogue, interact, think, reflect, analyze, apply, and take action to become skillful rather than full of skills.

Indeed, the nature of what educators do, especially when trying to do the right things, is “dangerous”. But it is “good danger” for which they are drafted to serve as change agents in society’s most vital institutions that are supposedly structured to prepare emancipated upright citizens and human champions. Needless to say, the alternatives are much graver and more detrimental to the most precious bounty civilization has ever possessed—the human mind and potential!

The current remedial trends in educational reforms reflect how reactive schools are in meeting the needs of students and their communities, especially the marginalized and underrepresented populations, that have been deprived of full participation for a long time. So many have fallen prey to the hidden curriculum that amplifies and nurtures a certain tree while concealing the entire forest of world realities reflecting cultural pluralism and human diversity.

For example, it has been assumed that history is recorded from the mouths of the rich and powerful to serve their agenda often with explicit blind bias and grotesque prejudice that ignore the world around them. This old-new notion is articulated by ancient scholars and echoed by contemporary ones. In fact, for thousands of years, the curriculum has, or should have at least, played a large role in portraying the world of reality around us objectively and humanely, but it is often reduced to amplify the reality, perspective, and narrative of the privileged few at the expense of the many oppressed populations. Thus, “those who tell the stories rule society,” Plato suggests, and consequently rule the mindsets, brains, attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of participants in schools and in other social settings.

Notwithstanding, there is no shortages of wars around us. The literacy wars have been re-emerging under new buzz tunes of the reading science and seemingly literacy fiction. We thought we have come a long way since the era of *Why can't Johnny read?* to *Why can't Jose read?* to the advent of *Why can't everyone read?* But, social justice educators have come under fire since *the war on free speech* coupled with *the war on the freedom to read* and *the war on the freedom to think* continue to rage. Similarly, the culture wars continue to hamper efforts towards emancipation in many fronts in the educational arena and beyond both locally and globally. The vicious attacks against many initiatives calling for educational empowerment continue to underscore the need to engage in courageous, difficult, and dangerous praxis advocated by the timeless Platonic, Freirean, and Chomskyan models that drive active involvement in *good danger* for the good of humanity.

With the ubiquity of culture wars, the Center for Leadership, Equity and Research (CLEAR) continues to be a vital forum for combating racism by opening the hearts and minds of anyone serious about equity and social justice. The CLEAR mission and vision largely is reified through the contributions and voices of scholars to the Journal of Leadership, Equity and Research (JLER) despite the resistance and ambivalence all around. In this volume, the authors engage readers in courageous discourse regarding what matters to the common good of schools and communities at large. The volume includes yet another account from which praxis outcomes can be gleaned—all in the name of *good danger*.

**Brooke Soles and Colleagues** examine formal and nonformal educational leaders' perceptions about the Cultural Proficiency training and its implementation. Their findings indicated variations based on many factors including participants' identity, roles, sociopolitical contexts among others. The study has implications for leaders for effective planning and implementation of cultural proficiency that should be a mindset to for sustaining culturally responsive practices in schools.

Based on the power language exerts in the communication and interactive processes, **Krissia Martinez and Colleagues** examine linguistic brokerage in the American health care system in linguistically and culturally diverse contexts. They shed light on the role bilingual children play in facilitating the communicative process and narrowing communication and cultural gaps. The study underscores the process of translanguaging in various educational and social contexts including the health care institutions.

**Denise Ramirez and Amy Williams** draw upon the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework to examine inclusive practices in diverse physical education classrooms. Given the unique aspects of physical education goals, objectives and pedagogies, the study is critical in helping novice and veteran teachers to consider the place of inclusive and responsive practices to respond to the needs of all students in diverse settings. The article has direct implications for physical education teachers who seek to engage their students meaningfully (physically, emotionally, socially...etc.) and based on their unique circumstances and cultural needs and expectations.

In their phenomenological study, **Lervan Atticott and Brandy Kamm** examined the exclusionary disciplinary practices that negatively and disproportionately impact Black students academically, socially, and emotionally which have been attributed to the school-to-prison pipeline. They evaluated the lived experiences of students and teachers to explore the impact of restorative justice practices on exclusionary discipline. Their findings indicate restorative justice practices can effectively interrupt the over-suspension and expulsion of Black students if implemented as a practice as opposed to a program. While more research is needed in field, the implications of the study can be gleaned to better serve underrepresented students who have suffered immensely from a system that always failed them.

**Shaylyn Marks** provides thoughtful review of Milner et al.'s (2019) book *These Kids are Out of Control: Why We Must Reimagine "Classroom Management" for Equity* that underscores the systemic racism that continues to plague schools that were originally designed for the mainstream privileged populations without taking into account the unique needs and expectations of diverse students and their communities. The volume is yet another addition that affirms that the system's approach of blaming the victim is counterproductive; students will benefit more meaningfully when school leaders recognize that *it is system that is out of line* when it comes to serving diverse student populations, cultivating their assets while meeting their needs. Marks makes apt observations throughout her review while interacting effectively with the main thrust of the book and its implications for all participants in today's diverse schools.

Readers of this year's regular and first edition will find a powerful collection of contributions that have practical values for teachers, educators, and leaders whose vision and mission should be grounded strategic and seamless integration of diversity, equity and social justice.

Finally, on behalf of the JLER's entire team, we are grateful to all partners for preparing this special issue as well as the contributors, reviewers, and everyone who assisted in the production of this rich edition.