Theory & Practice in Rural Education (TPRE)

Call for Special Issue on Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity in Rural Schools and Communities

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Resistance in Rural Education

During the past 50 years, the U.S. has experienced a strengthening of neoliberalism's impact on various social structures (Harvey, 2007). This has resulted in the decimation of trade and professional unionization, increased wealth inequality, and racial resegregation across the country. Schools continue to be microcosms of these broader injustices. As neoliberal reforms took hold in national and state policy, the stripping of collective bargaining rights has changed the work of teaching across states (Swalwell et al., 2017). School choice models have exacerbated differences in school funding between wealthy and poor students (Ravitch, 2013), and by some indicators, schools are more racially segregated today than they were in 1970 (Rothstein, 2013).

These changes have disproportionate impacts on historically marginalized groups and further cultivate power structures of racism, classism, sexism, and heteronormativity, among others. In fact, neoliberal efforts and white supremacy mutually sustain each other. In cities, this looks like Black, Brown, and working-class families being displaced through policies that aim to increase school "choice" for gentrifying white, upper class families (Lipman, 2011). While not always given the focus and attention that urban spaces receive, rural spaces have been equally affected by the expansion of global capitalism's reach. The overpowering neoliberal narrative that the role of education is to support standardized, individual success in a global marketplace undervalues the critical thought needed to cultivate collective political action to resist corporatization, divestment, consolidation, and other unfavorable policies that have been acted upon rural areas (Cervone, 2017). Additionally, it centers progress on a perceived norm that further marginalizes those who are already othered in rural spaces (Howley & Howley, 2010). Education reforms that center on these accountability measures produce a "zero-sum" game for rural educators to play (Schafft, 2010) and de-prioritize, or erase, a focus on the needs of all rural students and families - those who schools and school leaders should be most accountable to.

However, within these oppressive structures, important enactments of agency make space for resistance (Giroux, 2001). Such resistance can improve lives and make rural spaces more equitable and more just. Some of the most important sites of resistance in rural areas are schools. Through research, scholars can document the counterstories of diverse students as forms of resistance. They can counter narratives of rurality that ignore, for example, the experiences of Latinx students in rural school settings (e.g. Chang, 2017). In doing so, scholars can engage the critical insights of minoritized youth in rural schools to speak back against deficit-based narratives of rural students and fashion more culturally sustaining pedagogies. Community organizations and schools can also collaborate to use the community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) of rural communities to intervene in the specific issues that those communities face from a social justice framework. For example,

Southern Echo--an organization that addresses rural education issues in Mississippi--has worked with public school students and teachers to identify and intervene in specific housing and environment inequities in their communities (Lockette, 2010). Researchers and practitioners can work with organizations and schools in rural contexts to document and develop these and other types of social justice initiatives (e.g. Grimes, Haskins, & Paisley, 2013).

In this special issue of *TPRE*, we aim to highlight research, teaching, and curriculum that operate as resistance to neoliberal and oppressive educational policy and practice by inquiring into issues of social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in rural education. Theoretical frameworks that might be helpful in these explorations include rurality (Marsden, 2006), place-conscious education (Gruenewald, 2003), critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001), decoloniality (Patel, 2015), indigenous education (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008), and other critical frameworks, including but not limited to queer theory (Pinar, 2013), feminism (Fraser, 2013) and Black feminist thought (Collins, 1989; Hooks, 2014). Particularly useful would be frameworks that address the intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1990) of oppressions in the rural context. Practice-centered frameworks such as Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris, 2012), Equity Literacy (Gorski & Swalwell, 2015), Six Elements of Social Justice (Picower, 2012), and/or Social Justice Standards (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016) could also be employed to frame or inform empirical or conceptual work. Manuscripts might address aspects of the following issues or related inquiries specific to rural education settings:

- What educational practices effectively redistribute resources or recognize differences (Fraser, 1995) in more just ways?
- How can teachers and school leaders value, integrate, and/or center funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) in rural schools?
- What does abolitionist (Love, 2019) and anti-racist (Kendi, 2019) work look like in rural education settings?
- How do practices and phenomena in rural areas speak back to deficit ideas of rural spaces (e.g. House & Howard, 2009)?
- What does social justice education within content area disciplines (Math, Science, Social Studies, English Language Arts, Enrichments) look like in rural educational spaces?
- What are the impacts of neoliberal education reform on diverse rural learners?

This work could explore classroom practice, educational leadership, librarianship, counseling or other specialist work in P-20 classrooms and other educational settings.

Those interested in being considered for this special issue should submit a full manuscript to the TPRE system (http://tpre.ecu.edu) by March 28, 2021. Questions about possible topics or ideas should be sent to Dr. Jennifer Gallagher (gallagherj17@ecu.edu). All submissions will go through the TPRE process of double-blind review by experts in the field.

Submission Date: March 28, 2021
Publication Date: Fall 2021
For more information, contact: Dr. Jennifer Gallagher (gallagherj17@ecu.edu)

Estimated Timeline

- Manuscripts Due:
  - March 28, 2021
  - Accepted on a rolling basis up until the close date
- Double Blind Review Process:
  - Approximately 2-month turnaround (April/May)
- Articles selected for Revise/Resubmit or Minor Edits
  - Revise/Resubmit Deadline: 45 days from receipt of feedback (May/June)
- Second (limited)Double Blind Peer Review Process From resubmissions:
- Approximately 1-month turnaround (July)
  - Final selection of articles selected for Minor Edits:
- Deadline: one month from receipt of feedback (August)
  - Expected Publication Date: October 2021

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