Editor's Comments

The current issue of the *Journal of Teaching and Learning* contains a number of intriguing contributions: three well-written articles and two insightful book reviews. First, Curt Dudley-Marling provides readers with a thoughtful critique of the *resilience of deficit thinking*, in particular as it is expressed in the work of popular writer Ruby Payne. For Dudley-Marling, Payne represents a clear-cut, although deeply troubling example of a writer who produces under-researched work that promotes and popularizes deficit models of thinking. As many readers will certainly know, and as Dudley-Marling reminds us, forms of deficit thinking among educators and others have been difficult to dislodge from the public imagination, despite the ongoing scholarly critiques of their value and merit. And, the impact of deficit thinking on children in schools is of no small matter, as social class remains a powerful factor in shaping, and sometimes determining, students' academic achievement. Playing the 'blame game,' deficit thinking traffics and trades in the idea that academic underachievement in school is the fault of the individual, as though they have some innate deficit. Unfortunately, this simplistic view does very little to put under scrutiny the broader systems and structures of oppression that insidiously pathologize and disadvantage working-class, working poor children. So ensconced within the public imagination, so prevailing and resilient is the so-called 'truth' of deficit thinking, that to think otherwise in the context of mainstream public education is something of a revolutionary act, to paraphrase George Orwell.

Dudley-Marling's article, then, is an important and timely critique. Educators, including administrators and teachers, will find his work useful as it provides a thoughtful and ultimately an important and critical evaluation of the reliability of Payne's claims. His critique certainly has relevance for many educators including administrators, teachers, and other adults in a variety of jurisdictions and regions who are struggling with identifying and developing thoughtful, respectful and more sophisticated researched based ways to understand all children, in particular those who come from working class and working poor backgrounds.

Next is Erin Careless's article, titled *Social Media for Social Justice in Adult Education: A Critical Theoretical Framework*. Careless explores how social media has changed the way many people network, form relationships, learn and share knowledge. Careless argues that as a non-centralized tool for communication, social media has the potential to provide important space for critical discourse that supports the aims and goals of social justice. Her paper is productive in a sense that it develops a theoretical framework that can be used to study social media in adult education as a way to foster critical thinking and an awareness of social justice issues. In this sense, Careless draws our attention to how the empowerment of individuals is part and parcel of the larger project of social change. To be sure, although it has almost become cliché to say we live in a digital age, Careless's well-written paper will help readers develop an outline for a critical theoretical framework to explore the issues of social media and adult education to develop critical social justice theme discourse.

How should teachers support struggling readers? Our third article, by Steve Sider and Christina Belcher, addresses this issue by examining teacher candidates' engagement with struggling readers using a particular reading intervention in the context high need schools. Drawing on the work of Dorothy Smith, in particular *The Everyday World as Problematic*, Sider and Belcher explored teacher candidates' experiences as they wrestled with the everyday activity of trying to support struggling readers. The researchers examined the experiences and reflections of teacher candidates as they journey through their involvement with a program designed to support struggling readers. Although much more could have been said about gender relations, gender identity and gender construction in particular when it comes to exploring the topic of male teachers and boys by drawing on a now well established body of critical research literature (see, for example, Lingard, Martino & Mills, 2009), by exploring struggling readers students and the 'everyday lives' of student teachers, Sider and Belcher provide insight into how one may prepare for a teaching career. One insight, while not necessarily new to those who have been working from a critical stance for some time, is the necessity to commit to, and engage with, an ethos of 'permanent critique.'

Also included in this issue for readers are two insightful book reviews. First, Barbara A. Pollard provides an in-depth and thoughtful review of the recently published work *Brave New World: Teachers Doing Social Justice Work in Neo-Liberal Times* by Patrick Solomon, Jordan Singer, Arlene Campbell, and Andrew Allen. Her review highlights the way in which this book can be productive as it shows how educators can challenge the increasingly powerful neoliberal influences and forces that are continuing to shape, reshape and misshape education across jurisdictions and regions in ways that counter the aims and goals of social justice. Our second book review, by scholar Atinuke Adeyemi, thoughtfully examines the recently published text, *International Approaches to Professional Development for Mathematics Teachers*. Adeyemi's well-written book review will certainly function as a proper guide to those interested in math education.

Finally, this edition of the *Journal of Teaching and Learning* exemplifies a mix of research questions and approaches that have characterized the *Journal* over the years. The *Journal* has over the course of time actively sought out high quality articles that generate rich discussions on significant issues as they relate to teaching and learning, in the broadest sense of the phrase. We of course invite your participation in these important discussions as you submit manuscripts for review, act as reviewers, write book reviews, and share your thoughts and ideas with us. This issue of the *Journal of Teaching and Learning* is one we anticipate with enthusiasm and we look forward to sharing it with you.

Reference

Lingard, B., Martino, M., & Mills, M. (2009). *Boys and schooling: Beyond structural reform*. Palgrave Macmillian: United Kingdom:

Editor's Note: The editor of the *Journal of Teaching and Learning* retracts the article, "Re-positioning Ecological Education and Teacher Education Programs in Ontario," which was authored by C. L. Beckford and published in this journal in 2008, 5(1), pp. 55-66.

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