

## Editorial: [Healthy and Transformative Spaces] *in education*

Twyla Salm

*University of Regina*

Thank you to the seven graduate students in the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina who wrote the insightful articles and book review published in this special issue. Their contributions demonstrate the wide variety of ways that healthy and transformative spaces manifest in education. As McCuaig et al. (2022) suggest, teachers provide a wide spectrum of health-related services that fall within both a pathogenic role and “a more salutogenic role, serving as general resistance resources that seek to promote students’ welfare, security and well-being” (p. 160). It is the latter, the salutogenic category, where the authors in this issue focus their analysis. While schools have long been concerned about the well-being of students, the meaning of *healthy spaces in education* changes as social, political, environmental, and cultural forces shift over time. Similarly, as scholars consider how to do education differently, they should guard against *transformative education* becoming cliché; that is, overused to the point of becoming meaningless (Fantuzzo, 2022). Fantuzzo (2022) argues for transformative education as aspirational (p. 159), stating it is not about asking: “Is this school transformative? But rather: Are students changing because they are making contact with educational values and aspiring to better appreciate them?” (p. 171). I invite the reader to use this question as a lens when reading each of these articles, and imagine possibilities for creating and enhancing healthy and transformative spaces in their own contexts in education.

In the first article, Whitney Blaisdell shares her action research study in which she listens to parents share observations of their children at play during the pandemic. In her article, she claims that her findings and imaginings will help school communities re-think healthy, caring spaces for children to play and learn. Next, Brooke Breti examines how various environmental conditions within schools influence creative thinking. She argues that all students have the potential to be creative, especially when they are exposed to creative teachers who know how to promote creative thinking as key elements of healthy transformative learning spaces in K-12 classrooms. Also focusing in classrooms, Jessica Madiratta explores Gay’s (2018) eight attributes of culturally responsive teaching. She explains how these attributes can contribute to healthy learning spaces, particularly for Indigenous students, and how they might transform pedagogy to be beneficial for all children. Ashlee Sandiford also attends to questions related to culture in her thoughtful literature review of anti-racist scholarship. Calling for anti-racist actions, especially for those people who are not racialized, Ashlee provides examples of ways that teachers and administrators can work towards transforming their learning spaces to improve the well-being of their students. Notably, she offers a framework she calls “the RAISE Theory” that she describes as a tool to help educators reflect on their anti-racist practices. In the fifth article of this special issue, Avery Matthews writes about developmental disabilities, specifically addressing the merits and challenges of direct/explicit and social constructivist approaches of teaching in inclusive classrooms. Finally, Hui Xu describes her study that explores the challenges graduate Chinese students encounter when making small talk. Her study offers insights into how universities can transform, not only their services for international students, but also toward providing healthy welcoming spaces for students for whom English is an additional language. Another graduate student, Chioma A. I. Olumide-Ajibola, wrote a compelling book review of *Nuances of Blackness in the Canadian Academy: Teaching, Learning and Researching While Black*, edited by Awad Ibrahim, Tamari Kitossa, Malinda S. Smith, and Handel K. Wright. Her thoughtful analysis of this

four- part book invites all readers, regardless of race and ethnicity, to enter the Blackness in the academy conversation with a view to disrupt the inequities that have persisted in teaching, learning and research.

As I connect together my final thoughts, I would like to begin by thanking the team that made this graduate student special issue possible. The publishing process was inspired by Dr. Andrea Sterzuk's (2016) *in education* graduate student issue that focused on power, identity and resisting audit culture by offering an alternative way for new academics to enter the publishing domain. The unique process, used in that 2016 graduate student issue and in this issue, was designed to be less competitive and more supportive, yet rigorous and productive. It involved inviting graduate students, who were open to being mentored through the publishing procedures, to submit their work for consideration. First, graduate students attended an "introduction to publishing workshop" and a follow-up meeting, the outcome of which was an initial draft manuscript that was vetted by the guest editor and a reviewer. Then, graduate students were paired with a reviewer-mentor who offered an open review process to support changes and revisions over time. Finally, manuscripts were submitted for a final review in an open review process with both the reviewer-mentor and the guest editor. The co-editors-in-chief and the managing editor of the journal played important roles in the final stages, resulting in the high-quality articles you are reading in this publication. In Dr. Sterzuk's (2016) editorial, she stated "[o]ther ways are possible" (p. 2) and now, with this second graduate issue published, maybe we will see a trend emerging...and I will argue, it is a healthy and transformative space for new scholars to publish.

I wish to extend a sincere "Thank You" to the reviewer-mentors: Emily Ashton, Melanie Brice, Michael Cappello, Kathleen Nolan, Scott Thompson, and Brittany Tomin.

### References

- Fantuzzo, J. (2022). Aspirational standing: Recognition in the transformative classroom. *Philosophical Inquiry in Education*, 29(3), 158-172. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1094133ar>
- Lopez, A. E., & Jean-Marie, G. (2021). Challenging anti-black racism in everyday teaching, learning, and leading: From theory to practice. *Journal of School Leadership*, 31(1-2), 50-65. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1052684621993115>
- McCuaig, L., Enright, E., Ross, T., & Macdonald, D. (2022). *Teachers as health workers: A critical understanding of the health education interface*. Routledge.
- Sterzuk, A., (2016). Editorial – Guest Editor. Special Issue: [Power and Identity] *in education*, 22(2), 1-2. <https://doi.org/10.37119/ojs2016.v22i2.337>