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## Letter from the Editors

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Hello *JCTP* readers!

As the Senior Editors of the *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis*, we welcome you to our newest special issue: *Navigating Barriers and Offering Alternative Educational Opportunities*. On behalf of our editorial board, we are excited to present such awesome critical work that offers alternative ways of learning in this special issue. We are eager for you to start reading!

The foundation of this special issue was born out of a desire to not only recognize the needs of non-traditional learners, but also to be more inclusive in what is considered education. As an editorial board, we recognize that oppressive policies, financial hardships, lack of social capital, strict scheduling and expectations, Euro and androcentric curriculums, and a myriad of other factors in the P-20 setting present non-traditional learners with barriers in achieving their educational goals (Kaplin, 2009). Additionally, we note that traditional notions of education limit relevant and meaningful educational opportunities for non-traditional learners. This special issue set out to explore the barriers faced by learners often overlooked or left out of educational spaces and to provide alternative educational practices, spaces, and opportunities. We believe that this special issue addresses these ideas and provides hope for more inclusive learning.

*Navigating Barriers and Offering Alternative Educational Opportunities* contains a variety of scholarship, including interviews, empirical pieces, and reflective essays. The special issue opens with two powerful interviews from Dr. Debbie Reese and Dina Toulan. Dr. Reese's interview details navigating the academy, working in a Midwestern university-setting, and raising a child as a Nambe Pueblo Indian woman. Dina's interview provides insight on navigating and overcoming barriers as a Deaf learner and instructor. Dina's interview is in both video and written form. We invite you to watch the video in Dina's first language, American Sign Language.

Following our interviews, Amy Anderson and Dr. Hannah Carson Baggett present a Project in Humanization as they research an alternative school in Alabama, providing firsthand student accounts and discussing the dehumanization of silence. David Atekpaztin Young, Michelle Garcia-Olp and Ceema Samimi challenge gringismo in education, with their firsthand accounts, through use of Tribal Critical Race Theory and Indigeneous Liberation Epistemology. Elizabeth Jach and Gene Gloeckner explore how postdoctoral fellows attributes impact their attitudes towards immigrant education using data from the General Social Survey. Vanessa Sansone, Corey Sparks, and Paulina Cano-McCutcheon analyze the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series - USA to examine the metro and non-metro variation in Texas and the role race, ethnicity, and residential location play on postsecondary enrollment. Through a critical and contemplative autoethnography, Maryann Krikorian makes sense of her academic experience by uncovering Western assumptions in higher education and its impact on adult learning. Lastly, in a reflective

essay, Christy Oxendine discusses her time and experiences teaching theology in a women's prison and the importance of critical conversations beyond the traditional walls of the academy.

We are happy to announce Amy J. Anderson and Dr. Hannah Carson Baggett as the third recipients of the **Dr. Isaac Gottesman Featured Contribution to Critical Thought and Praxis** designation. This designation is given to one piece of scholarship in each issue that reflects Dr. Gottesman's vision for the journal, along with his dedication to critical thought and scholarship. Anderson and Carson Baggett's manuscript, "*I Just Put My Head Down, But They Still Get on to Me*": *Navigating Silence in an Alternative School in Alabama*, provides an intimate, first-hand look at the experiences of students attending an alternative school in Alabama. Their "Project in Humanization" discusses the impact and power of silence in these spaces and discusses the implication of this power in educational policies and practices. The authors provide suggestions for changes to navigate alternative schools in a way that makes them successful for the learner.

The editorial board would like to make yet another announcement with the release of this issue. *JCTP* now has new faculty advisors. We are grateful to Drs. Noreen Naseem Rodriguez and Jeanne Dyches for their time spent on the board and guidance provided. We are thrilled to announce and welcome Drs. Connie Hargrave and Doug Wieczorek as our new faculty advisors. Each of our new advisors' expertise brings a unique perspective to our editorial board with Dr. Hargrave's interests in social justice and STEM and Dr. Wieczorek's interests in educational policy and how PK-12 school and instructional leaders operate within different contexts.

Lastly, we are currently accepting submissions for our second issue of 2020: *Politics, Purpose, and Education: What/Whom Do Each Serve?* Submissions will be accepted until July 10 and publication is planned for late fall. We encourage all who are interested in reading the full call to visit our website for more information.

On behalf of the entire editorial board, we thank you for your continued support. We would like to thank each of our authors, reviewers, and advisors for your invaluable contributions and assistance. As the Senior Editors, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our editorial board, who worked incessantly through many changes and the challenges of coronavirus to ensure that this publication deadline was met.

We hope you enjoy *Navigating Barriers and Offering Alternative Educational Opportunities*.

Happy reading.

Alexia Angton and Katie Anthony  
Senior Editors