

Introducing *JCES'* New Community Perspectives and Student Voices Editor

My choice to become the new associate editor for the Student and Community sections of *JCES* is a choice for voice. Juffermans and Van der Aa (2013) provide a five-facet conceptualization of voice in educational scholarship. Voice can refer to the actual discourse unit of analysis (talk itself). It can also refer to the approach we use to make sense of sense-making (content analysis of what is said). Voice can describe the will to be heard (speaking up) and also describe efforts to empower individuals toward this end (emancipatory action). Lastly, in these ways voice represents both a theory and a method (praxis) for democratic education and society, one in which everyone has a say in forging our collective future. This idea of the public commons in which perspectives are exchanged, examined, tested, tossed down, or taken up is critical to the narrative of U.S. history.

I've spent 13 years as a professor of education in a large university and I'm still looking for the public commons. Where is space for the multi-faceted voices and voicings of scholars, students, teachers, youth, parents, and community members to not just co-exist but co-contribute? My editorship at *JCES* is an attempted answer to this question. I'd like to make of this space a public commons.

These initial submissions serve both to introduce myself to the *JCES* readership and initiate this space.

The Student Voices pieces from Iowa State University undergraduates Zoey Spooner and Karson Westerkamp are examples of creative critical educational autobiographies. Zoey and Karson wrote them in response to an assignment in my Bilingualism, Bilingual Education, and U.S. Mexican Youth course. I asked them to narrate a moment when their lives taught them what being "U.S. Mexican" means. This is part of an enduring emphasis in the course on being reflective about ourselves in, of, and as the work of learning to teach all children well. Zoey's essay about a restaurant scene and Karson's poem about a school scene interpret for us their experiences as white-identified individuals within the broader (in and out of school) cultural pedagogy of Mexicanness. They provide us a glimpse of reproductive racial formation in motion. In subsequent writing, not published here, Zoey and Karson analyze their



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autobiographies by drawing on educational theory and relevant research, thus making their familiar selves strange to them. This helps achieve the ultimate purpose of developing intimacy with ongoing self-inquiry essential for educational excellence grounded in equity-based principles and practices.

The Community Perspectives piece is from Carla Dawson, program coordinator with Children and Families Urban Movement in Des Moines, Iowa. Carla oversees the middle-grades after-school gender-specific programs, the Backyard Boyz and the Whyld Girls. In my capacity as director of the ISU 4U Promise, I worked with Carla and a wider team of university and community partners to implement what we call Design Dialogues. The ISU 4U Promise "promises" tuition awards to fifth graders who graduate from two specific elementary schools in Des Moines and eventually enroll at Iowa State University. The core activity of Design Dialogues was to hear from these Promise-eligible youth, many of whom identify as U.S. Mexican (thus connecting their stories to those of Zoey and Karson), about their learning broadly conceived—where do they learn in their communities, where would they like to learn, how could they learn differently—in order to generate an action plan for ISU 4U Promise-involved change efforts. What is published here are remarks Carla made about youth impact as part of a presentation on this effort at the Cambio de Colores (Change of Colors) conference.

I hope these initial submissions help you get to know a bit about me, the work I do, and the values that led me to *JCES*. I hope you see in them examples of multi-faceted voice and voicings. Zoey and Karson are in the process of their own emancipation so that they can serve as allies in the emancipatory work of their future students. Carla is speaking out about how her young people are speaking up about their learning and, in this way, serving as our teachers. Me, Zoey, Karson, Carla and her Whyld Girls are together on these pages today. I invite others to join this public commons tomorrow.

References

Juffermans, K., & Van der Aa, J. (2013). Introduction to the special issue: Analyzing Voice in Educational Discourses. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 44(2), 112–123.