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Eric C. Sheffield
Western Illinois
University

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*Our thanks to the cadre of scholars who serve as reviewers without whose services the journal could not exist.

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Critical Questions in Education: Volume 14, Issue 2

June 15, 2023

Hi Friends of the Academy,

Summer greetings from the Academy for Educational Studies. Before getting to a rundown of Volume 14, Issue 2 of CQIE, just a reminder that we will be in Chicago in November and hope to see many of you there to share ideas and do some networking.

I think you will find the manuscripts in this volume thought-provoking, timely, and internationally expansive. The first manuscript reports on a study conducted by Lauren Angelone at Xavier University in Cincinnati which investigated teachers' use of Instagram posts during the Covid-19 pandemic—particularly interesting given the isolation teachers experienced as the pandemic raged. The second manuscript reports on a second research study investigating participant partnering preferences for a state-wide teacher mentor program. Cheryl Wold and her colleagues found some intriguing preferences in terms of how mentees prefer meeting with mentors and validated the importance of good mentor/mentee pairings. The third manuscript, penned by Maxwell Tsoka, Jeanne Kriek, and Byung-In Seo, marks a transition from discussions of technology to discussions international: their manuscript provides a narrative of a technological novice teaching in South Africa in terms of the teacher's "technological pedagogical reasoning" capacity.

In Volume 14, Issue 2's fourth manuscript, Stacy Denny provides some qualitative insight into current Caribbean educational practices in light of what Denny describes as a conflict between edutocracy and elitism when it comes to educational reform in the Caribbean. Our final manuscript sends us to early 20th century Germany and the work of philosopher Hannah Arendt. Frank Giuseffi explores how Arendt's philosophical work might impact our thinking about educational matters. Volume 14, Issue 2 closes with a review of *Neoliberalism & Education*, a collection edited by Bronwen M.A. Jones and Stephen J. Ball and published by Routledge this past April. Jessy Cheung suggests this is well worth reading for anyone interested in neoliberalism ongoing impact on educational policy and practice.

Happy reading.

PAX,

Eric C. Sheffield, Editor
Critical Questions in Education

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The “Perfect” Teacher: Discursive Formations of #teachersofinstagram

Lauren Angelone, Xavier University

Abstract

As social media use has risen, teachers have also taken up the medium in specific ways. This study investigates the ways in which teachers are using Instagram, particularly at a moment in time during a global pandemic, when teachers are both more isolated and dealing with multiple modes of instruction, many that involve some new use of instructional technology. Top posts made by teachers using the hashtag #teachersofinstagram are categorized and analyzed using a feminist critical discourse analysis through a visual methodology. Findings indicate that the top posts on #teachersofinstragram portray teachers as heteronormative White females with a focus on sharing the positive aesthetics of the teacher, her classroom, and her life, but that teachers are also experiencing stress and resilience as they connect with other teachers on this platform.

Keywords: *social media, teacher education, critical discourse analysis*

As we move into the third decade of social media, there is much known about how teachers have come to use these platforms over time. Teachers have utilized various social media to teach, to learn, and to create community to serve these purposes. Twitter became the landing place for most teachers and the research followed. But as new platforms emerge, teachers are shifting to new spaces. Instagram, a social image sharing site launched in 2010, has 7-8 million posts using the hashtag #teachersofinstagram at any given time. Teachers are on Instagram and active, but the research on this use is nascent.

As teachers use these tools, they also contribute to a larger discourse around what it means be a teacher. The context around which teachers are engaging in social media also matters. At this point in time, teachers are engaging in social media in the midst of a global pandemic. The pandemic has affected education in a variety of ways, most notably that many schools were not able to meet in person for several months and then continued with various remote and hybrid options throughout the 2020-2021 school year. Additionally, in the United States in particular, the year was fraught with political turmoil around the pandemic, anti-Black racism, and the 2020 presidential election. These political moments further impacted education through an increased awareness around the ways the pandemic disproportionately affected Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), which was a signal of existing inequities (Strauss 2020), as well as through the resulting battles among local school boards around the teaching of Critical Race Theory, provoked by Donald Trump during his 2020 campaign (Bailey et al., 2021; Shocker & DeSenso, 2021/2022). This study is an investigation into how teachers were using the hashtag #teachersofinstagram in this context. As such the research question is, *what do the top Instagram posts by teachers in the fall of 2020 tell us about how teachers are using Instagram and how teachers are being constructed through this use?*

Literature Review

Teachers and Social Media

The research on social media and teachers is mostly focused on the ways in which teachers use social media for teaching and learning. Teachers are defined in this study as K-12 teachers, but post-secondary and pre-K teachers also use these teacher hashtags as well. The benefits of social media in the classroom have been found to enhance student engagement, community connections, and teacher-student interactions (Greenhow et al., 2020). Teacher professional learning in both formal and informal spheres is also supported on social media platforms, though there is a disconnect between formal uses that are open-ended and voluntary and informal uses that are closed-ended and structured (Sharma et al., 2019). The community developed within Twitter, the most studied platform, has been reported to be a benefit for teachers (Carpenter & Krutka, 2015; Carpenter et al., 2017; Nagle, 2018) for developing teacher identities, mentoring (Carpenter et al., 2017), and resource sharing (Hsieh, 2017; Carpenter & Krutka, 2015).

As the COVID-19 pandemic told hold across the globe, teachers’ uses of social media shifted. Teachers began to experience stresses related to the pandemic itself and to the massive changes to their work due to the shift to emergency remote teaching. Teachers' workloads increased (Kaden, 2020) and they had to figure out how to adapt their instruction quickly and find opportunities for innovation (Khirwadkar et al., 2020). This was easier for some schools and teachers than others as a persistent digital divide still exists in terms of hardware, high speed internet, and varying skill levels with the technology itself (Miller, 2021), particularly in rural (Kaden, 2020), urban (Ligon, 2021), and some international contexts (Padilla Rodríguez, Armellini, &Traxler, 2021; Tajik & Vahedi, 2021). These changes in teachers’ work and lives precipitated uses of social media in which they were more likely to “connect and share” as well as “learn and follow” (Aguilar et al., 2022).

Most studies of social media and its uses by teachers are focused on professional learning (Greenhow et al., 2020) or are exploratory in nature (Sharma et al., 2019). ‘The field needs more research on how and why teachers acquire knowledge and learn through participation in informal learning opportunities via social media, including those “invisible” or indirect processes of reading, curating (e.g. favoriting), sharing, passing along others’ information (retweeting), and more’ (Greenhow et al., 2020, 34). Similarly, I believe this research should seek to understand and make visible the sorts of gendered and raced discourses that are constructed and reproduced by teachers, particularly as the pandemic shifted these uses.

Instagram and Teachers

There is emerging research around the use of Instagram by teachers, mostly focusing on the benefits to teaching and learning, but a few took a cultural approach to understanding its use. Like on Twitter, teachers are using Instagram to share resources and for connection with fellow teachers (Carpenter et al., 2020). Unlike Twitter though, Instagram was noticeably more polished and sometimes teachers’ posts were created in an effort to sell products by connecting their account to another site, Teachers Pay Teachers (Shelton et al., 2020), a marketplace for teachers to buy and sell lesson plans and other classroom materials ostensibly by teachers, but increasingly by publishing companies. It was also found that Instagram encouraged communication and local and global teacher education, despite student hesitancy to connect with instructors via their personal accounts (Al-Bahrani and Patel, 2015). Another study, however, showed that students preferred an Instagram assignment to a PowerPoint assignment, finding it beneficial to learning about a language and culture while practicing digital literacy, and did not find that students had privacy concerns with using their personal accounts (Leier, 2018).

Several studies of Instagram in education looked at the use by teachers through a cultural lens. The Instagram usage habits of future primary school teachers were analyzed and found "intensive" use (which these authors link to smartphone addiction) and the selfie as the most common type of post (Romero-Rodriguez et al., 2020). In another study, the discourse of social media (not just Instagram) was studied in a composition class and found that it could be a tool for activism, identity formation, and inclusion (Wake and Laughter, 2019). Edwards and Esposito (2018) studied a viral post of a Black female teacher to understand the ways in which an Instagram post can be a site of both liberation and domination.

Instagram in Culture

Instagram, outside of its use in education, is more often studied from a cultural perspective to understand the ways in which it is taken up by professional fields and groups of people for varying purposes. Instagram has been studied within the fields of art, medicine, and politics. Instagram was studied as a way for visitors to an art gallery to extend their aesthetic experience before and after their visits (Seuss, 2018). Instagram has also been used by medical centers to share information and free resources as the visual nature of the platform is helpful in fields such as radiology (Thomas, Johnson, & Fishman 2018). Politically, the use of Instagram by Donald Trump's 2016 campaign to spread a positive populist message (Dobkeiwicz, 2019) while the hashtag #ShePersisted was used on Instagram and other social media as a form of feminist activism (Boling, 2020).

Instagram has also been studied within groups outside of a particular field. Marginalized groups, thus far, seem to be the focus of this type of research. One parent's Instagram account was studied to understand the ways in which children are presented through the lens of a parent and the future implications for that child (Dobson & Jay, 2020). Women have been studied through the ways in which both pregnancy (Mayoh, 2019) and motherhood (Zappavigna, 2016) are constructed on Instagram. "…Instagram images generally portray an enviable elite lifestyle and hegemonic (White, heterosexual) ideal of beauty" (Mayoh, 2019, p. 207). And finally, a larger study of Hispanic urban artists found that they used Instagram to resist racialization and stigmatization (Magro 2018).

Theoretical Framing and Situating Myself

This study is framed by poststructural notions of the ways in which knowledge and power are inextricably linked and how humans are awash in discourses that shape us and are shaped by us. I see knowledge through a Foucauldian (Foucault, 1980) lens, such that there is no real, true, or neutral knowledge. Rather, knowledge is constructed by discourses that compose groups and individuals with room for agency to push against discourses. Feminist theory and critical whiteness studies dovetail with poststructural theory in this study in multiple ways. For example, Butler's (1990) explanation of gender as a performance constructed by discourses rather than as a static biological category divorced from culture is one way in which postructuralism helps me to identify how discourses surrounding gender can be both oppressive and transgressive. In addition, whiteness (Amico, 2016), understood as yet another discursive formation with power to construct the dominant discourse with oppressive effects. These two formations, gender and whiteness, are particularly important to this study of teachers on Instagram, as the teaching profession in the western world that dominates #teachersofinstagram, is currently a White woman's profession (Lagemann, 2000; Galman, 2012).

With a subjectivist theoretical framing in which knowledge is constructed by those in power, it is important to situate myself as the author. I am a heterosexual cisgender White woman and a former public school teacher, that thus felt quite at home in the profession. Though I grew up poor, I am now a university professor with advanced degrees. I have been educated in several lenses for understanding the ways in which education impacts society, from poststructuralism to social justice to best practices. In this type of work, I seek to understand the ways in which teachers, as a category with which I identify, are both reproducing oppressive discourses and transgressing discourses. I feel well situated to do this work in order to be able to call on other White women in education to reflect on these discourses, in order to push against the discourses that damage our BIPOC colleagues and students and to do better.

Method

A visual methodology (Rose, 2007) was used to conduct a feminist critical discourse analysis (Lazar, 2007) of public posts on the hashtag #teachersofinstagram throughout the fall semester of 2020. For fifteen weeks, the top nine posts were collected via a screenshot and link. The "top posts" on Instagram are the posts for any given hashtag that are ostensibly the most liked and commented upon, given an extra boost through the category of top posts. Instagram does not give more detail on the algorithm used to generate top posts, which is problematic given the concerns that algorithms are designed by engineers that are themselves awash in normative discourses and the algorithms may encourage the reproduction the status quo (Cotter, 2019). "Top posts" were selected for their discursive power. They are ones that elevated by this community through interactions, which gives them more visibility. This study is only a study of the top public posts of this particular hashtag. The intention is to understand the discursive formations that that have power within this community. The hashtag #teachersofinstagram at this time period had over 7 million posts per day (10.3 million on the day of this writing) and is the top hashtag listed if you begin to search for the term "teachers" (Carpenter et al., 2020). The use of "of Instagram" to name a community specific to this social media site is a common practice.

After the collection of these posts, exclusion criteria were used to narrow down the posts to those that were practicing teachers (PreK-grad). Posts that were excluded were meme accounts about teaching, business accounts selling items to teachers, or individuals who were not teachers and who appeared to be gaming the hashtag by having several related accounts comment on it multiple times. Of the 135 posts collected, 82 were determined to be relevant posts from classroom teachers. There were 74 unique accounts.

Once the data were collected, other data connected to each post including presenting gender and race, location, a summary of the text from the post, and the number of likes and comments, were also collected. The author searched through the profile in order to gather more detail about the demographic information if it was not readily available in the post. This demographic information was collected specifically to provide context to potential issues of power in the discourses present in the posts. If a White teacher or a Black teacher posts the same image, it will be read differently by an audience. Presenting gender and race, though problematic and based on my assumptions as a researcher, are collected with the understanding that gender and race are socially constructed (Butler, 1990; Zack, 2017) and in this feminist discourse analysis, the assumed gender and race of the subjects in the posts is deeply connected to issues of power.

A feminist critical discourse analysis was conducted in multiple steps (Howarth, 2000) using a visual methodology. First, I became familiar with the posts describing each in detail focusing on the object of the photo and what was in the foreground and background. From this visual analysis, I generated initial themes based on recurring visual imagery. Then I coded the material more closely, describing the content of the posts in more detail, confirming or complexifying the initial themes, and exploring the possible connections between the initial themes. For example, White women and themes of motherhood were commonly found together. Once these codes were generated, I analyzed the codes and images through the critical questioning of positioning and practices of power as well as the potential for challenge and change, in accordance with Foucauldian and poststructural feminist theory. This process led me to the narrowing of three themes listed below. Finally, I asked a colleague to provide a check of my codes and analysis to offer additional perspective before finalizing themes. This colleague challenged several codes around femininity and race, which allowed me to both broaden and focus my themes.

Findings and Discussion

The 82 unique Instagram posts that were selected for analysis were grouped into three themes. These themes are *Teachers are White and traditionally feminine, Teachers present themselves as "perfect,"* and *Teachers present themselves as stressed but resilient.* See table 1 for demographic/contextual information.

Table 1: *Demographic and Contextual Data*

Baseline characteristic	*n*	%
Presenting Gender		
Female	73	89
Male	8	10
Unknown	1	1
Presenting Race		
White	62	76
Black	6	7
Middle Eastern	4	5

Latino/a	4	5
Asian	3	4
Unknown	3	4
Location		
North America	53	65
Australia	9	11
Europe	9	11
Asia	3	4
South America	1	1
Unknown	7	9
Average Likes Per Post	1080	
Average Comments Per Post	30	

Teachers are White and Traditionally Feminine

Posts falling into this theme were coded as White (41), feminine (45), heteronormative (12), and mother (8). There were some posts in opposition to this construction of teachers that included nondominant groups (12).

In the many posts coded as White, the post includes an image of a White presenting body. Most of the time, this is an image of a White body or bodies as the dominant feature in the photograph, but other times just a hand is shown that indicates the whiteness of the author. For example, several teachers post pictures of themselves standing in a classroom setting. Other teachers share resources, such as a book or handout, that shows just their hand holding the resource.

Most posts coded as White were also coded as feminine with explicit images that represented heteronormativity and motherhood. These posts included images presenting gender in traditionally feminine ways, including long hair, dresses, traditionally feminine colors, and photos of women with male partners, pregnant, or with children. This definition of heternormativity is drawn in part from Adrienne Rich's (1980) definition of "compulsory heterosexuality," in which women includes the assumption that all romantic relationships are between a man and a woman and that a woman must be desired by the man in, for example, feminine dress (including colors like pink (Koller 2008)) and control of body hair (Fahs 2011). In one post, a White woman is in a bikini holding a pink water tumbler standing in the water at the beach. Her hair is tied up in pigtails and she is playfully turned and touching her sunglasses. In another image, a teacher is in a form-fitted black dress showcasing her pregnant belly. She is wearing a hat over her long blonde hair that is partially pinned up, a large blue ring, and heels. In another representative image, a White teacher with long brown hair is wearing a pink dress holding infant twins who are each wearing a pink bow and outfits with pink flowers.

In the sea of whiteness and traditional feminine discourses, there were some nondominant groups represented. These posts included some male presenting teachers as well as teachers from different races. Though heteronormative in nature, several posts include Black, Latina, and Asian women and one mixed race couple is represented. Two teachers identify as queer, but these representations were not included in the top posts, rather they were discerned from viewing the individual profiles.

In considering the Foucauldian productive power of discourses, these top posts of the hashtag #teachersofinstagram construct teachers as predominantly White and traditionally feminine. Because whiteness (Amico 2016) and gender (Butler 1990) are cultural constructs, this analysis coded White presenting as White and female presenting as feminine. The representation of race and gender in these spaces are less objective and more productive. In this case, the top teachers of Instagram are producing a discourse of teaching that is mostly a White, traditionally feminine space and that productive value has more impact than the intention of the teacher posting it, whatever that may be. Rather, these posts serve to construct both race and gender in particular ways within the teaching profession. Though there are some spaces for thinking otherwise, this includes teachers that fit and those that do not fit.

Teachers Present Themselves as "Perfect" Teachers

The second theme identified was the presentation of teachers as "perfect" in multiple ways. Posts falling into this theme were coded as sharing resources (10), "pretty" scenery (18), "pretty" clothes/smiles (36), "pretty" classrooms (20), commercialism (18), as well as some inspiration/religious posts (11). There were some posts in opposition to this perfected image of the teacher that were coded as political challenges (8).

What binds the codes of this theme together is the carefully curated nature of the posts. Those coded as "pretty" appear to be staged to include a rosy view of the person, the backdrop, or the content shared. The resources shared are mostly resources that are aesthetically pleasing with carefully constructed fonts and images. Inspiration is shared in a way that supports a generally "nice" and agreeable view of teachers and the work that teachers do.

Many of the posts coded as "pretty" clothes/smiles are posts that were also coded as White and feminine with teachers in dresses smiling nicely. In one post coded as "pretty" scenery, there is a mountain and lake backdrop with two White hands, one with an engagement ring on. In a post coded as "pretty" classroom, an image of a classroom with neat black tables adorned with a pink basket in the middle of each one is shared. The teacher desk is to the side with a pink chair and decorations are neatly displayed on walls with colorful puffballs hanging from the ceiling. A similar "pretty" classroom post shows desks in neat rows, spaced appropriately for teaching in a pandemic. Each desk has a star on it with a student name. There's a red carpet on the ground and a matching red bulletin board and red drapes on the window of the classroom.

In a carefully composed post, coded as sharing resources, a book is shared with carefully placed objects around it, stickers, plants, and eye mask. This post was also coded as commercialism as it included a tag to the author of the book and a link for where to buy it. Posts coded as commercialism, typically included the teacher highlighting things that could be purchased, such as clothing or teacher resources. Each post coded as commercialism was also coded as "pretty" clothes/smiles, "pretty" classrooms, or resource sharing.

Posts coded as inspiration included either text as the main feature of the image of the post or supporting text in the image that referenced some uplifting words. One post coded as inspiration includes the image of a smiling Black male sitting at his desk. On his desk is a mug that reads, "I (heart) my teacher" and the supporting text in the post reads, "First Day of School. Year 7! Imagine how great this school year is going to be!!! (scared emojis in a reference to teaching in a pandemic) 'For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of sound mind.'"

Within this attractive, agreeable, and mostly nice discourse on #teachersofinstagram that paints a perfected image of teachers, there were some posts that were more challenging to the status quo as they were political in nature. One post of this sort was text on a purple background that read "White and non-Black educators… How will we shift our thinking from 'I will use my privilege', to 'I will give up my privilege'?" Another post provided a particularly anti-"pretty" message and included a dimly lit bedroom with a folded up treadmill and a folding table with a laptop on it and explicitly suggested in the associated text that teachers should work with what they have in a pandemic, rather than allowing the posts on Instagram or Pinterest to make them feel inadequate. This post was unique in the explicit rejection of this discourse.

The identification of the theme of the perfect teacher is borrowed from Joanne Mayoh (2019) and her analysis of "perfect pregnancy" on Instagram. As in Mayoh's work, teachers on #teachersofinstagam reinforce dominant discourses through practices surrounding how to do teaching "well." Often these include professional looking shots of women in well-manicured homes or classrooms, wearing fashionable clothing, and the sharing of carefully curated resources. These images taken together create a discursive formation that supports a sort of self-surveillance (Foucault, 1977), in which teachers control themselves and present only the best parts to avoid not fitting in or being rejected within the social media space.

Shelton et al. (2020) used the term "edu-influencer" to describe the microcelebrity nature that some teachers obtain with more followers and more influence. In her study, edu-influencers provided discussion of teaching strategies and a general positive stance toward the teaching profession, but most were also selling something. Edu-influencers sold teaching resources on Teachers Pay Teachers or promoted clothing, much in the same way that many of the top posts on #teachersofinstagram did. They warn of this neoliberal ethic creeping into the profession.

> If teaching and teachers come to be visualized as highly stylized, strategically posed microcelebrities with picture-perfect bulletin boards, how will an actual teacher ever measure up? More broadly speaking, edu-influencers may perpetuate a K-12 culture that values superficiality, "carefully constructed…self-presentation" (Markwick & boyd, 2011, p. 140), and individualistic self-branding (Khamis et al., 2016), over collective success of teachers and students. (Stokel-Walker, 2019, p. 547)

Teachers Present Themselves as Stressed but Resilient

In contrast to the previous theme in some ways, the final theme is that teachers are stressed but resilient. There's an admission in this posts that there are difficulties teaching, certainly to teaching in a pandemic, but there is a hopefulness that remains. Posts falling in this theme were coded as overworked (6), teaching in a pandemic (26), humor (8) and technology (8), mainly due to teaching in a pandemic. There was one category seemingly in opposition in which teachers were enjoying their breaks from school (11), but needing breaks also implies that teachers may be stressed and finding ways to survive.

Each of the codes categorized under this theme showcase the ways in which teachers portray the stresses of teaching, particularly at this point in history when schools all over the world were changing modes of instruction in response to the pandemic. Most of these posts identified the stresses, but also showcased the ways in which they were hopeful and adapting to their changing classrooms. For example, it is seen as acceptable to work on the weekends, to have three screens going at once to support remote instruction, or to have had to completely rethink instruction due to spacing requirements and masking. Humor is sometimes used to make soften the posts or to make jokes about needing a break. However, there are also several posts that encourage the sharing and taking of breaks as a way to refresh from the difficult job of teaching.

In one post coded as teaching in a pandemic, a teacher shares a selfie in which she is wearing a mask and a plastic shield over her face. In the text, she describes how she spends all day adjusting the mask and the shield and is quite uncomfortable. She uses a laughing emoji at the absurdity of her picture with both a mask and a shield. In a similar post also coded as teaching in a pandemic, a masked teacher stands in front of desks that are spaced apart. In the text, she describes how she has had to rethink teaching kindergarten in person during a pandemic and has challenges like not being able to work in groups or come to the carpet, but that she is also hopeful that her students will be able to learn and have fun even if they have to keep distance, hand sanitize, and wear masks.

Technology often played a large role in many of the posts of the stresses of teaching in a pandemic. In the post with three screens mentioned above, the teacher uses the text to disclose that she finds teaching remotely "indescribably hard" and begs parents for patience. In another post coded as technology, a teacher looks happy sitting at her kitchen table in front of four different screens and a ring light, arms spread wide theatrically. In the text she says that teaching virtually "feels like you're hosting a live TV show for 6 hours straight." She also uses a laughing emoji at the absurdity of her current teaching situation.

Posts coded as humor were often memes, in which text is the main feature, sometimes combined with a corresponding image. One post coded as humor and teaching in a pandemic and humor includes a meme with the image of an actor on the phone and reads, "Teachers giving tech support 90% of the time during digital learning. Hello, IT, have you tried turning it off and on again?" Another post coded as humor just has text that reads, "I'm not opposed to every weekend being a three-day weekend."

A final code that both opposed and supported this theme showcased teachers on their breaks from school. Teachers shared vacation pictures or just pictures of themselves relaxing at the beach or on a walk in the park on the weekend, at times encouraging other teachers to step away from their work and relax.

In the feminized teaching profession (Lagemann, 2000), with a loss of status, came a loss of power. Though many are unionized, teachers often spend time outside of contracted hours in order to meet the demands of the profession. Just like in a traditionally feminine heteronormative relationship where women take on the bulk of the household work, women often take on work beyond the school day. The pandemic required even more of teachers, asking that they teach in an unfamiliar format or teach in classrooms with new rules of masking, social distancing, and sanitizing shared surfaces, all while unvaccinated (this study took place in the fall of 2020 before vaccines were widely available). Through these challenges, the top posts of #teachersofinstagram showcase the ways in which teachers adjust, adapt, and connect with one another in order to complete the task that had become more difficult. Perhaps this analysis is a further oppressive feminized conception of the perfect teacher, another iteration of women having to "do it all." Perhaps the resilience shown is a great privilege granted to those with access to the right technology and possessing the right technology skills (Tyson, 2015) or to those White women without a pre-existing condition, who could enter classrooms with optimism about the unknowns of teaching in a pandemic. Perhaps resilience is a privilege, but most of the top posts included teachers who rose to the occasion in an unprecedented time in history.

Limitations

This study is a snapshot of the top posts of #teachersofinstagram in the Fall of 2020. Though #teachersofinstagram is a large and active hashtag, there are other hashtags used by teachers on Instagram that could be explored. Additionally, more work could be done on the recent posts to see how teachers are using Instagram more generally, rather than understanding the most popular or "top posts" at any given time. Lastly, only the posts themselves and the captions posted by teachers were studied. The comments were not studied, nor were the stories posted by these same teachers. Stories could be an interesting avenue to study the less "perfect" version of what teachers share via social media. Finally, age of the teacher was not studied and may be an interesting factor in the ways in which posts were constructed.

Conclusion

Through this small study of a particular period of time on a popular hashtag on Instagram, teachers appear to be using Instagram to document their lives, personally and professionally, connect with other teachers to share classroom aesthetics, teaching ideas, to make extra money, and to empathize with one another. These uses construct teachers as a particular group dominated by White and feminine discourses that are using Instagram in a certain, perhaps more polished way, that presents the highlights of their teaching and their lives as teachers and women. The sharing of the personal within what would appear to be a professional hashtag alongside the presentation of the more polished pieces of teaching could be connected to the feminization of the teaching profession as the camaraderie among a mostly White and female teaching force begins with women who enter teaching because it is understood as a field where niceness and compliance are rewarded, particularly at the primary level (Galman, 2012). Or perhaps this is unfair and, instead, teachers are taking control of their image in a low status profession (Lagemann, 2000), presenting the best of what they do for public viewing, though I think this analysis breaks down in that this hashtag is used to connect teachers to each other.

Regardless of the motives, in a world where the teaching force is in need of diversification at a time when, in the United States the students are growing more diverse in a context heavy with anti-Black racism, what is important to interrogate as teachers and teacher educators is what these discourses do. Foucault (1980) views the construction of knowledge as powerfully productive. Though the teachers of #teachersofinstagram share content that they feel is worthy to share on this platform, they do so awash in discourses that frame teachers in the broader society as well as discourses currently being constructed by top posts on Instagram (though as of the time of this writing the top posts algorithm has changed again, including more than 9 posts at any given time). These discourses and perhaps the hidden algorithm then further frame teachers who come to use Instagram in a way that might get the most likes or comments, in a way that reinscribes dominant discourses rather than pushing against them to consider the ways that those discourses may do harm or exclude.

This has implications for teacher education as social media has come to be used both formally and informally by teachers and teacher educators. If teachers come to #teachersofinstagram and do not seem themselves, how does this discourage them from participating in a larger network of teachers, or from entering the profession at all? Or, how does this encourage them to reproduce the status quo instead of transgressing in ways that might open up avenues to new discourses that are more inclusive and more just? As such, I echo Nagle's (2018) call for a critical social media literacy, one in which teachers and preservice teachers critically examine what is posted to social media as well as critiquing what they themselves post. Though there are pockets of transgressive discourses, these are not the dominant discourses. And because the visual nature of Instagram is somewhat of a departure from more studied platforms like Twitter, there exists a need to study how, once again, the medium is the message (McLuhan, 1962).

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Lauren Angelone is an Associate Professor of Science Education and Instructional Technology at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. She is a former middle school science teacher and has her PhD in Cultural Foundations, Technology, and Qualitative Inquiry from Ohio State University.

The Importance of Pairings in Mentorship Programs

Cheryl Wold, Andria Moon, Anna Schwan, Alan Neville,
& Janeen Outka, Northern State University

Abstract

This study examined pairing preferences of participants in a statewide new teacher mentor program. Participants self-identified the importance of factors such as teaching the same or different content area, same or different grade span, same or different building, and having similar or different personalities. Since the study was impacted by the transition to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, preferences for types of meetings for mentoring and successful remote mentoring strategies were studied as well. There was a significant positive correlation for mentors who were at a different location from their new teacher and the mentor's preference for a combination of virtual and face-to-face meeting. There was a significant negative correlation for mentors who were at a different location from their new teacher and the mentor's preference for face-to-face meetings. Findings also indicated a 99% retention rate for new teachers who participated in this two-year mentoring program.

Keywords: *mentoring, new teachers, COVID-19 teacher impact*

Introduction

Mentoring is an important component in many professions for the well-being, continuity, and success of the organization. In the field of education, where school budgets are usually stretched thin, retaining teachers is essential for not only providing cohesive instruction but also for reducing recruitment and training costs for new teachers. Providing mentoring is especially important in the teaching profession because new teachers may find themselves isolated in their classrooms with limited time to develop collegial relationships and model the best teaching practices of their peers. In fact, in many rural areas, teachers may find themselves in a school with no colleagues who are teaching similar grade levels or content.

Given the recent global pandemic, retaining teachers has taken on an even greater sense of urgency. A significant factor negatively impacting schools today is the increasing attrition rate for new teachers. In a seminal study on teacher retention, Ingersoll (2003) found that 40-50% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years of employment. A recent study reported that in the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States, 15-50% of newly hired teachers leave within the first five years (Whalen, Majocha, & Van Nuland, 2019). Lehman (2017) reported that in 1998, the average teacher had 15 years teaching experience, but by 2008, it dropped to one-year of experience. Gareis and Nussbaum-Beach (2007) described this obstacle by stating, "With nearly half of all new teachers leaving the classroom within 5 years, schools are faced with the challenge of retaining early-career teachers while simultaneously providing them with the support they need to develop into effective professionals" (p. 227).

A related factor affecting new teacher retention is the lack of overlap between new and experienced teachers. As experienced teachers leave the profession, some new teachers are left without colleagues who can serve as mentors. The relationship between new teachers and mentors is mutually beneficial; Lehman (2017) noted that not only are new teachers seeking out positive reinforcement, but experienced teachers are seeking validation as well. One program that offers support for both new teachers and experienced teachers is a structured statewide mentoring program.

In Alaska, Adams and Woods (2015) reported that the state mentoring program realized an increase in teacher retention from an average of 67% to an average of 77% over a six-year period among new teachers who participated in the mentoring program. Similarly, a 2019 Canadian study on mentoring programs concluded, "The evidence from this study through the data findings emphasizes the need to develop a process for mentorship to increase retention rates for all early career teachers while navigating and building capacity leading to success for all within their schools" (Whalen et al., 2019, p. 603).

When examining mentoring programs, it is important to consider the type and structure of the program that might be most effective. A study conducted in Australia emphasized the difficulties that can arise when new teachers and mentors are mismatched by disciplines and levels of education (Southcott, Marangiao, Rady, & Gindidis, 2020). Another recent study evaluated the effectiveness of mentoring programs taking into consideration the increased professional demands on teachers during a pandemic (Albert, 2020). This study focused on the reasons a mentoring program failed, such as lack of training, scheduling issues, and the demands of the mentoring program. With growing demands placed on new teachers, it is imperative to establish effective mentoring programs. Alternatively, a 2021 study identified 14 out of 23 mentoring practices that were able to predict new teachers staying in the same teaching assignment for a second year (Maready et al., 2021). Furthermore, Maready et al. (2021) found seven practices that predicted new teacher retention into the second year and the fifth year of teaching: assignment of a mentor in the first year, mentor who taught the same subject, frequency of supports in classroom discipline, frequency of supports in technology use, frequency of supports in selecting and adapting curriculum, support improved classroom management, and support improved variety of instructional methods.

Ideally, every new teacher would have a mentor available who teaches similar content in a similar grade level and with a compatible personality. In other related professions, such as psychology, one research study discovered the importance of matching and commitment to the mentoring relationship (Chao, 2009). In another study, specific to education, Lozinak (2016) found that mentee/mentor pairings were important to the participants. Their findings indicated that 74% of mentors reported that an understanding of the mentoring process was important, while 94% identified teaching in the same school as an important factor, 82% reported the same schedule as an important factor, while only 52% identified the same teaching style as an important factor. Additionally, Lozinak (2016) noted mentees, mentors, former mentees, and administrators all stressed the importance of matching mentors and mentees in the same building. Former mentees, mentors, and administrators noted that pairs should be, at minimum, similar in grade or content area. According to Weimer (2020), past practices such as selecting mentors based on factors such as high regard, seniority, convenience, or on a rotational basis have proven to be ineffective and inefficient. Weimer (2020) also recommended that the mentor selection process should be aligned with the vision, purpose, and goals of the school district's mentoring program.

Rural states, such as the one in this current study, face some unique challenges. Vast physical distances existing between one school district and another along with small school sizes that dictate a smaller teaching staff can impact the effectiveness of mentoring programs. However, there are ways to overcome these difficulties. One method is online coaching and e-mentoring. In rural states like Kansas, online mentoring programs seem to fill an important need (Sawchuk, 2013). The New Teacher Center has been involved with E-Mentoring for new teachers since 2002 and was instrumental in facilitating the mentoring program in Kansas. Another study focusing on virtual coaching for new teachers identified that "coaching can provide new teachers with embedded supports directly tied to their classrooms and teaching practices and can be embedded within mentoring programs" (Israel, Carnahan, Synder, & Williamson, 2012, p. 197). Gareis and Nussbaum-Beach (2007) noted that "online mentoring expands traditional new-teacher support by bringing novice and expert educators together in Web-based professional learning communities" (p. 231). Darling-Hammond and Hyler (2020) described supporting new teachers through mentoring as one of the most important things that policymakers can do as schools continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic increased the need for various types of mentoring programs for beginning teachers. Overnight, many schools transitioned to remote learning. Many beginning teachers found themselves more isolated and alone. Barnhart (2020) addressed how this shift resulted in "crisis teaching" and a common sentiment among all teachers that they were relegated to a feeling of being new teachers all over again. However, Barnhart (2020) also noted that new teachers may have some advantages as digital natives over mentors, and likely have more experience using technology to connect with others and are more likely to experiment. Two unlikely benefits of the pandemic were the ability to have more time to innovate and the equal footing of both parties, beginning teacher and mentor, when they both became novice distance teachers. According to Barnhart (2020):

> The drastically different teaching context created by the pandemic demanded a willingness to try different teaching approaches. Many of the successes revealed to me in my work with teachers over the past few months resulted from mentor/mentee pairs collaborating as peers to solve problems (p. 127-128).

New teachers and their mentors who were not in the same location during the pandemic needed to find ways to continue the mentoring relationship. Although the following study reported on the difficulties for medical students, Thampy, Ramani, McKlimm, and Nadarajah (2020) found that virtual mentoring benefitted participants by providing a means to connect geographically distant mentors and mentees. Gareis and Nussbaum-Beach (2007) explored the benefits of online mentoring and concluded that it was a viable method for supporting new teachers. In their findings, they were pleased to discover that many of the important components of effective face-to-face mentoring, such as modeling, questioning, and prompting reflection, were evident in online mentoring (Gareis & Nussbaum-Beach, 2007). In addition, the authors identified that other important components of mentoring, such as developing supportive professional relationships, were evident in the online mentoring as well (Gareis & Nussbaum-Beach, 2007).

The Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the importance of matching new teachers and mentors in a meaningful and purposeful way by location, content area, and grade span. Additionally, the researchers aimed to examine the effects of COVID-19 on a statewide mentoring program. Finally, the retention rate of the new teachers was calculated at the end of the two-year participation period. The authors developed the following research questions:

> RQ1. What are the overall pairing preferences and perceptions identified by new teachers and mentors regarding the same building, same district, same content, similar grade spans, and personalities?
> RQ2. How did COVID-19 impact preferred meeting formats?
> RQ3. What strategies did mentors use to support new teachers during mandatory school closings that resulted from COVID-19?
> RQ4. What is the retention percentage of new teachers who participated in the 2-year mentor program?

Methods

Participants

The selection of participants for the statewide mentor program was established in a previously published research study (Schwan, Wold, Moon, Neville, & Outka, 2020) and was duplicated in the current study. The participants were first- or second-year teachers and experienced teacher mentors who participated in a statewide mentoring program in a rural, Midwestern state.

Participants in this study included a sample group of 217 new teachers and 114 mentor teachers who applied and were selected to participate in a statewide mentoring program during the 2019-2020 school year. The purposes of the statewide mentoring program were: 1) direct classroom observation and consultation; 2) assistance in instructional planning and preparation; 3) support in implementation and delivery of classroom instruction; and 4) other assistance intended to enhance the professional performance and development of the beginning teacher. Mentors selected for participation in the statewide mentoring program were required to have a minimum of five years of teaching experience, one of which was within the last seven years in a school or other education-related field, and to have a valid teaching certificate. New teachers were required to be within the first two years of teaching. Upon selection, mentors were matched with new teachers based on the following factors: geographic location, same building or district, job-alike position, or administrator request. Furthermore, participants of this study elected to enroll in a course for college credit and submit responses to the researchers' multiple choice and open-ended questions that were required for course completion. Because survey participation was required for course credit, the participation rate was 100%.

Program requirements included a commitment to a two-year formal mentoring relationship, as well as the following yearly requirements: participation in a one-day kickoff event for mentors and their new teachers, participation in a one-day mentor training event for mentors, participation in three webinar trainings for mentors, attendance at a two-day culminating mentor academy event for both mentors and new teachers, and participation in a minimum of 34 mentoring contact hours each year. The statewide mentoring program funded travel costs including transportation, meals, and lodging for mentors and new teachers to attend the mentor training, kick off events, and the mentor academy. Mentors and new teacher partners who worked in different cities were also provided with travel costs for up to four round trip visits to each other. Additionally, mentors were provided a $1,500 stipend for each year of service as a mentor. Through a state department of education collaboration, both mentors and new teachers who successfully completed two years of the mentor program and all requirements herein were granted automatic renewal of their state teaching certificates.

The researchers, in conjunction with the statewide mentoring program coordinators, developed the survey instrument to drive future mentor program improvements. Mentor and new teacher surveys contained 13 questions total, eight of which were used for this study. Multiple-choice questions were used to gather demographic data and to allow participants to self-identify their mentor pairing descriptions, as well as to indicate their preferences in mentor pairings and meeting formats. Open-ended questions were used for participants to identify specific mentoring strategies used. Surveys were administered electronically to mentors and new teachers participating in the formal statewide mentoring program during the 2019-2020 school year and were also enrolled in a university course for graduate credit. Participant responses were collected at the end of the yearly mentoring experience. All participant surveys were completed in their entirety and used in this study. A similar procedure was followed in a research study conducted with mentors and new teachers enrolled in a statewide mentoring program during the 2018-2019 school year (Schwan, Wold, Moon, Neville & Outka, 2020).

Procedure

The survey was administered as part of a university graduate course offered in conjunction with a statewide mentoring program. The survey contained demographic questions, information on the actual pairing arrangements of the participants, and perceptions of the importance of various factors, and preferences of communication for mentoring programs.

Retention information on the new teachers who completed the two-year mentor program at the end of the 2019-2020 school year was gathered in the fall of 2020-2021 school year. Current teaching assignment information was obtained from the state department of education teacher certification website and/or school websites.

Fidelity of Implementation

Hastie and Casey (2014) assert that researchers need to provide: 1) a rich description of the curricular elements of the study, 2) a detailed explanation of the method implemented, and 3) a detailed description of the context so that readers acquire an exact and comprehensive understanding of the rationale for the research design and the outcomes desired and obtained. When schools transitioned to a remote learning format due to COVID-19, the researchers needed to examine data collection procedures to protect the fidelity and continuity of the study. The goal was to research mentor and new teacher pairing preferences and the efficacy of a statewide mentoring program. When the expected format of the mentoring program shifted, the researchers sought to understand how the participants facilitated the mentoring program in the COVID-19 climate. We discovered the meetings were held virtually, safely distanced face-to-face, or a combination or both. The researchers then sought to investigate the participants' meeting preferences.

Data Analysis

Three hundred thirty-one surveys were collected, and researchers analyzed responses from new teachers and mentors to determine how their pairings impacted their perceptions of how new teachers and mentors should be paired in a mentoring program.

Because the researchers were looking to understand how much difference existed between the expected and the actual distribution, data analysis was conducted using Pearson's Chi-squared tests. A Chi-square test of independence is appropriate to use when comparing the categorically coded data collected with the frequencies that one would expect to get by chance alone (Urdan, 2005). Although results from the analysis did not indicate statistically significant values, results are reported as higher than or lower than expected distribution.

The Chi-square tests were utilized to compare perceptions of the new teachers and mentors on the factors of same building, same content, same district, same grade span, combination of virtual and face-to-face mentoring, face-to-face mentoring, no preference, or virtual mentoring.

Results

Pairing Preferences of New Teachers and Mentors

General Pairing Preferences

New teachers were asked to select from five options (content, building, grade span, location, and personality) to identify the most important overall factor and second most important overall factor for pairing mentors with new teachers. New teachers said content was the most important factor (34.6%) and the second most important factor was the same building (32.7%). Mentors were asked to select from five options (content, building, grade span, location, and personality) to identify the most important overall factor and second most important overall factor for pairing mentors with new teachers. Mentors said the same building was the most important factor (41.2%) and the second most important was similar content (34.2%).

Location Where Practicing

New teachers. When analyzing the most important overall factor for mentor pairings, there were differences in new teacher pairing preferences based on location. Location where practicing referred to whether the mentor and new teacher pairings were teaching in the same building, the same school district, or a different school district. New teachers who were paired with mentors in different districts self-reported that being matched with a mentor who shares the same content area was most important (46.4%) and being matched with a mentor who taught within the same grade span was the second most important factor (31.9%). New teachers who were paired with mentors in the same district self-reported that being in the same building was the most important factor (40.6%) and being matched with a mentor who was teaching within the same content area was the second most important factor (25.2%).

Pearson's Chi Square test results showed higher than expected proportions for new teachers who are at a different location from their mentor and the preference to have a mentor who teaches in the same content or grade spans. There was a significantly lower than expected proportion for new teachers who are at a different location from their mentor and the preference to work in the same building. Additionally, there were higher than expected proportions for new teachers who teach in the same location as their mentor and the same location as their mentor and the preference to have a mentor with a similar personality.

Mentors. When analyzing the most important overall factor when considering pairings, there were differences in mentor preferences as they pertain to location. Mentors who were paired with new teachers in a different district self-reported that being matched with a new teacher who shares the same content area is most important (70.0%) and being paired with a new teacher having a similar personality was the second most important factor (30.0%). Mentors who were paired with new teachers in the same district self-reported that mentoring a new teacher in the same building was the most important factor (44.2%) and being paired with a new teacher within the same content area was the second most important factor (31.7%).

Pearson's Chi Square showed higher than expected proportions for mentors who are at a different location from their new teacher and the preference to mentor a new teacher who teaches in the same content area. There were also higher than expected proportions for mentors who are at a different location from their new teacher and the preference to have a new teacher with a similar personality. Data showed lower than expected proportions for mentors who were in the same district as their new teacher and the preference to work in the same building. Additionally, data showed lower than expected proportions for mentors who are at a different location from their new teacher and the preference to have a teacher who teaches the same grade span.

Teaching Assignment

New teachers. When analyzing the most important overall factor when considering pairings, there were differences in new teacher pairing preferences based on teaching assignment. New teachers who had different teaching assignments from their mentors self-reported that pairing mentors with new teachers who teach the same content was the most important pairing consideration (29.3%) and pairing mentors with new teachers who teach the same grade span was the second most important factor (28.0%). New teachers who had the same teaching assignment as their mentor self-reported that pairing mentors with new teachers in the same building was the most important pairing consideration (38.7%) and pairing mentors with new teachers that taught the same content was the second most important factor (26.3%).

Pearson's Chi Square showed higher than expected proportions for new teachers who had a different teaching assignment from their mentors and their identification of pairing mentors with new teachers who teach the same grade spans as the most important pairing consideration. Additionally, there were higher than expected proportions for new teachers who had a different teaching assignment than their mentors and their identification of pairing mentors with new teachers who teach in the same school district was the most important consideration. Similarly, there were higher than expected proportions for new teachers who had a different teaching assignment from their mentors and their identification of pairing mentors with new teachers who have similar personalities as the second most important pairing consideration. Data showed lower than expected proportions for new teachers who had a different teaching assignment than their mentors and their identification of pairing mentors with new teachers who teach in the same building was the most important consideration. Additionally, there were lower than expected proportions for new teachers who had a different teaching assignment than their mentors and their identification of pairing mentors with new teachers who teach in the same building as the second most important consideration.

Results indicated a higher-than-expected proportion for new teachers who had a similar teaching assignment as their mentors and the identification of pairing mentors with new teachers who teach in the same building as the most important consideration. Conversely, there were lower than expected proportions for new teachers who had a similar teaching assignment as their mentors and the identification of pairing mentors with new teachers who teach the same grade spans as the most important consideration. There were also lower than expected proportions for new teachers who had a similar teaching assignment than their mentors and their identification of pairing mentors with new teachers who have similar personalities as the second most important consideration.

Mentors. Mentors were asked to identify the most important consideration when pairing mentors with new teachers. When analyzing the most important overall factor when considering pairings, there were differences in mentor pairing preferences based on teaching assignment. Mentors who had different teaching assignments from their new teachers self-reported that being in the same building was most important (47.1%) and that teaching within the same grade span was the second most important factor (47.1%). Mentors who had the same teaching assignment as their new teacher self-reported that being in the same building was most important (40.2%) and being paired with a new teacher that taught the same content area was the second most important factor (32.0%).

Pearson's Chi Square showed higher than expected proportions for mentors who had a different teaching assignment from their new teachers and the identification of pairing mentors with new teachers who have similar personalities as the most important consideration. Data also showed higher than expected proportions for mentors who had different teaching assignments from their new teacher and their identification of pairing mentors with new teachers who teach the same grade spans as the second most important pairing consideration. Additionally, there were lower than expected proportions for mentors who had a different teaching assignment than their new teacher and their identification of pairing mentors with new teachers who teach in the same district was the second most important consideration.

Preferred Mentoring Format

New teachers. New teachers were asked to identify their preferred mentoring format. When analyzing the preferred mentoring format, there were differences in new teacher preferences based on pairings. New teachers who teach in different districts than their mentors self-reported preferring a combination of face-to-face and virtual meeting formats (49.3%). New teachers who teach in the same district as their mentors self-reported equally preferring a face-to-face meeting format and a combination of face-to-face and virtual meeting format (41.3%). Pearson's Chi Square showed higher than expected proportions for new teachers who taught in a different location from their mentors and the preference to meet face-to-face. Additionally, there were higher than expected proportions for new teachers who teach in the same location as their mentors and their preference to meet face-to-face.

New teachers who teach different content areas than their mentors self-reported preferring a combination of face-to-face and virtual meeting format (42.7%). New teachers who teach the same content area as their mentor self-reported preferring a combination of face-to-face and virtual meeting format (43.9%). There were higher than expected proportions for new teachers who teach different content areas than their mentors and the preference to meet virtually. Additionally, there were lower than expected proportions for new teachers who teach the same content area as their mentors and their preference to meet virtually.

Mentors. Mentors were asked to identify their preferred mentoring format. When analyzing the preferred mentoring format, there were differences in mentor preferences based on pairings. Mentors who teach in different districts than their new teacher self-reported preferring a combination of face-to-face and virtual meeting formats (70.0%). Mentors who teach in the same district as their new teacher self-reported preferring a combination of face-to-face and virtual meeting format (49.0%). Pearson's Chi Square showed higher than expected proportions for mentors who teach in a different location from their new teacher and the preference to meet face-to-face. Additionally, there were lower than expected proportions for mentors who teach in a different location from their new teacher and their preference for a combination of face-to-face and virtual meetings.

Mentors who teach a different content area than their new teacher self-reported preferring a combination of face-to-face and virtual meeting formats (58.8%). Mentors who teach the same content area as their new teacher self-reported preferring a combination of face-to-face and virtual meeting formats (49.5%). Data showed higher than expected proportions for mentors who teach different content areas than their mentees and the preference to meet in a combination of virtually and face-to-face. There were higher than expected proportions for mentors who are at a different location from their new teacher and the mentor's preference for a combination of virtual and face-to-face meeting. Conversely, there were lower than expected proportions for mentors who are at a different location from their new teacher and the mentor's preference for a face-to-face meeting.

Remote Mentoring Strategies

Following the state-mandated school shutdown in March 2020, new teachers and mentors were forced to pivot to virtual mentoring relationships and environments to meet the mentoring program requirements. The new teachers and mentors were compelled to develop and implement their own strategies for maintaining their mentor relationship. New teachers and mentors were asked to elaborate on the type of support mentors provided to new teachers in the areas of providing continued instruction, providing support in collaborating with colleagues and continuing professional relationships, and providing support in building relationships with students and their families. Below is a sampling of their responses from the open-ended survey questions regarding their use of virtual mentoring strategies and meeting formats.

New Teachers

- "Our district created a distance learning team to plan instruction for students in each subject area and grade level. I was selected to plan ELA activities for 5th graders in our building. My mentor offered to participate in this planning process as needed. We ended up planning most weeks' activities together, sharing ideas and resources as we went along. This collaboration was helpful, especially in figuring out the amount of work students should be given per day" (new teacher participant 12).
- "How to complete SPED paperwork and progress monitoring online" (new teacher participant 39).
- "My mentor showed me how to have students navigate STEMscopes (our online science program) when the servers changed, and students were unable to log in" (new participant 59).
- "My mentor provided me with lesson ideas for art when students may not have access to traditional art supplies at home" (new teacher participant 64).

- “The most useful support was when my mentor walked me through setting up a Doodle calendar so my students can set up one-on-one Zoom sessions with me. This is the single most useful tool I've used in distance learning” (new teacher participant 70).
- “We collaborated to design keyboarding projects. We completed a 'What Music Means to Me' project with all band and choir students. We tested out different online resources like Smart Music and Flipgrid before using them in our classes. We tested out Zoom, so we could complete auditions for our classes. We collaborated to make a plan through Zoom for lettering” (new teacher participant 115).
- My mentor and I discussed the best ways to continue distance learning through Google Classrooms and the best ways to modify assignments. We also discussed the best way to modify assignments/quizzes/tests into online programs, so it self-grades for immediate feedback. We've discussed keeping a healthy mindset through the shutdown and knowing how to keep home/work life somewhat separate. My mentor and I have collaborated on many assignments, trying to make them more "user friendly" and explicit with instruction” (new teacher participant 54).

Mentors

- “I used technology (Zoom, Google classroom) to observe my mentee teaching live lessons and provided feedback” (mentor participant 66).
- “I became a co-teacher and co-taught my mentee’s students using Google classroom” (mentor participant 87).
- “My mentee and I created a shared Google folder to share materials and resources back and forth electronically” (mentor participant 44).
- “We created a parent contract, a SMore newsletter, and used Class Dojo to assist my mentee in maintaining contact with parents” (mentor participant 27).
- “Together we created interdisciplinary exploratory projects for our classes to do together virtually during online Genius Hour intervention time” (mentor participant 58).
- “We worked together to use Google classroom to create flex learning time to accommodate the needs of families with limited number of devices and multiple students in the home” (mentor participant 49).
- “We participated in online PD/webinars to learn about virtual learning strategies for the music classroom” (mentor participant 18).

Retention

The current body of literature provided mixed results regarding new teacher retention rates that are impacted by mentoring programs. However, a very recent study identified specific components of mentoring programs that can predict new teacher retention in the same position through year five of teaching (Maready et al., 2021). Several of those factors that relate specifically to this current research study are as follows: assigned a mentor in the first year, mentor who taught the same subject, frequency of support in the classroom, and improved practices due to that support. The findings of this study indicate a new teacher retention rate of 99% after the completion of the two-year-statewide mentoring program. The researchers confirmed retention status of new teachers using the state’s public teaching database, which identifies a current teaching assignment. This current study corresponds with the findings in the Maready et al. (2021) study, “The study also emphasizes the importance of selecting effective mentors, identifying the characteristics of mentors which lead to retention of new teaches, and identified the frequency of mentor supports needed to increase retention rates of new teachers" (p. 96).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the importance of matching new teachers and mentors in some way, such as location, content area, and grade span. Additionally, the researchers wanted to examine the effects of COVID-19 on a statewide mentoring program. Finally, the retention rate of the new teachers was considered at the end of the two-year participation period.

Pairing Preferences and Perceptions

Analysis results indicate that overall, new teachers and mentors both prefer working with someone in the same location regardless of other factors. In addition, when both new teachers and mentors were unable to be paired with others in the same location, they preferred to be paired with someone who teaches the same content and/or similar grade span. These preferences were to be expected because we would anticipate teachers would prefer the convenience of being paired with someone easily accessible and with similar content knowledge and resources. Data analysis indicated mentors who were at different locations preferred someone with a similar personality. We believe this is because conditions were such that new teachers and mentors did not have naturally occurring work-related interactions and/or opportunities to connect. New teachers and mentors paired from different locations typically met outside of work hours and often in non-work settings; thus, personality preference became an important factor in those situations. Ultimately, both new teachers' and mentors' first preference was to be teaching in the same location, the second preference was the similar content area. Finally, if the new teacher mentor pairings were not at the same location and did not share similar content, personality preference became the important factor. The implications for future mentoring program development are to pair mentors with new teachers who work in the same building. An additional implication is to pair mentors with new teachers who teach the same content area. Not only are these pairing practices beneficial and preferred by new teachers and mentors, similar location and/or content area positively affects new teacher retention (Maready et. al, 2021).

Impact of COVID-19

Data analysis showed both mentors and new teachers overall preferred a combination of face-to-face and virtual meeting formats, regardless of the location or teaching assignments of the mentor pairs. New teachers had higher than expected proportions in their preference for meeting face-to-face, regardless of the location of the mentor pairs. It is to be expected that new teachers would prefer face-to-face meetings in order to build professional relationships with colleagues and develop a network of support during the new teachers' first two years of teaching. However, new teachers who had different teaching assignments than their mentors had higher than expected proportions in their preference to meet virtually. We believe that in these instances, new teachers were not seeking content related support and felt that virtual meetings were sufficient for professional conversations related to general teaching behaviors.

As data suggested strong preference for a combination of both virtual and face-to-face mentoring meetings, regardless of location or teaching assignments, it should be noted that virtual mentoring provided the opportunity for mentor pairs to meet the requirements of the mentor program despite the school closures in March 2020. These virtual meetings also provided additional convenience for mentor pairs who did not teach in the same locations. An implication of this preference for a combination of virtual and face-to-face mentoring meetings is that meeting format does not matter as much as the relationship building and the consistent support for new teachers in the field. With these results in mind, school districts can utilize virtual mentoring practices as part of a successful mentoring program which adds much more flexibility in designing and organizing mentoring programs.

Strategies to Support New Teachers

As previously discussed, the pandemic put both new teachers and mentors on equal footing: remote teaching and learning was new for everyone. Once the decision was made to transition to remote learning, both parties found themselves scrambling to find ways not only to engage their students, but to stay in contact with each other as well to effectively continue the mentor relationship and meet the requirements for completing the program.

A representative sample of new teacher open-ended survey responses were discussed above, and the theme of collaboration with their mentors to plan activities emerged, as many shared resources during the time of remote instruction. Of the seven responses, all seven specifically mentioned words or phrases such as *collaborate*, *walked me through*, *helped me navigate*, *helped me complete*, *provided me with ideas*, and *helped me design*. New teachers reported that they used tools such as Zoom, Google Classrooms, Doodle calendar, Smart Music, Flipgrid, and specific online curriculum materials.

Of the representative sample mentor responses mentioned above, an emerging theme was *working together*. One mentor mentioned using Zoom to observe her new teacher live and provide feedback. Another mentioned that she became a co-teacher and co-taught students using Google Classroom. All of the mentors expressed *working together* in some way to develop materials for students during remote instruction. Mentor teachers reported using tools such as, Zoom, Google Classroom, Class Dojo, and SMore.

Analysis of this data suggests that when new teachers and mentors were faced with challenging circumstances, the relationship became even more critical because new teachers and mentors indicated that they each needed support that the other could provide. Future mentoring programs should ensure that establishing positive relationships is the priority of any mentor program.

Retention

At the end of participation in the two-year mentoring program, the program graduates from our study had a 99% (97 of 98) retention rate; meaning 99% of them remained in the teaching profession in the 2020-2021 school year. Retention is the main reason schools and departments of education invest time and resources in mentoring programs. A significant finding such as the extraordinary high retention rate is an impactful finding that could positively affect the current attrition crisis. The current structure of this particular statewide mentoring program requires a two-year commitment between mentor and new teacher, which we believe contributed to the high retention rate. Relationships are important and teachers depend on that continuity which was provided through this experience.

The fundamental purpose in establishing this statewide mentoring program was to address teacher retention. Teachers are leaving the profession at an alarming rate. With such a high percentage of retained teachers who participated in the mentoring program, the implication of this finding is extraordinary. Creating a consistent, structured, program with accountability and follow-through for the coordinators of the program, the new teachers, and the mentors could potentially be a significant component to better combat the critical teacher attrition rates all over the country.

Conclusion

The mixed method approach followed in this current study discussed the self-reported participant' preferences regarding components associated with mentor pairings in a statewide mentor program. Both mentors and new teachers preferred similarity in location where practicing and content area. This seems to be paramount to building an effective relationship that simultaneously supports both groups during teaching and learning in a substantially difficult environment.

Our data also indicate that both face-to-face and virtual mentoring strategies are positive avenues for mentoring programs. Overcoming obstacles such as the distance between mentors and new teachers in rural areas and the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic were important considerations. Furthermore, modeling a mentoring program after this statewide mentoring program two-year model could enable other mentoring programs to achieve improved teacher retention rates among new teachers who participate for more than one year.

Regarding this study and the significance of mentor pairings, participants indicated that location was the most important consideration of the process followed by similar content, similar grade level, and then personality. Our study showed a high percentage of teacher retention for those new teachers who successfully completed the two-year mentoring program.

We believe the structure and organization of this two-year mentoring program led to positive outcomes and relationships, which in turn may have addressed teacher retention. The program facilitators' process of pairing new teachers and mentors led to greater satisfaction that was indicated by their comments and responses to survey questions. On the other hand, the researchers believe structured outcomes and processes are necessary to ensure consistent and fidelity of program implementation. Over 1,000 teachers participated in the statewide mentoring program, which is the most comprehensive and far-reaching educational program in the state to this point. Due to the rural location and sparse populations in some areas in this study, students and teachers from all over the state were impacted and/or affected by this program.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is the inability to control who participated in the program. The participants in this study chose to partake in the university graduate course for credit and perhaps the results were affected as such. In addition, we were not able to control how the mentors were paired, nor were we able to control where the new teachers and mentors were located. The shift from the traditional intended face-to-face model of the mentoring program to the virtual model could be considered a limitation even though we gained valuable information as a result. The current study did not focus on the effect of specific pairings on teacher retention. Future research focusing on correlation between one of the factors, such as same teaching assignment, and teacher retention may be beneficial.

Implications

Research is limited regarding how much input in the process is optimal for a mutually beneficial and productive mentoring experience (Finkelstein & Poteet, 2007). Therefore, implications for future research would include investigating participants' early involvement in the pairing process of a teacher mentoring program as opposed to an outside entity, like the state department of education, making the pairing decisions.

This study presented the important factors in the mentor/new teacher mentor relationship. A primary lesson learned was that the pairing process should take into consideration the pairing preferences of both new teachers and mentors. Perhaps the relationship could be more productive from the beginning if both participants felt their preferences are considered into the pairing relationship before the experience begins. Factors that influence the potential success of a mentor pairing included 1) location; 2) similar content; 3) similar grade span, and 4) personality. A successful match is more likely when the pairing criterion is a high priority for the new teacher and mentor (Johnson, 2002). In addition, it may be productive to consider the participants' preferred meeting style or modality so that the meetings are mutually beneficial for each party. If all participants are given the opportunity to share their preferences, concerns, and needs prior to the experience, they may be more motivated and committed to the overall process and mentoring relationship. It would be beneficial to study the impact of having both mentors and new teachers identify their preferences in a mentor or new teacher before the mentoring begins and at the conclusion of the mentoring experience.

Overall implications of this study, which was conducted during a global pandemic, lends a unique perspective on new teacher and mentor relationships. The study demonstrated the resilience and innovation of both new teachers and mentors as they transitioned overnight to both remote instruction and remote mentoring without any preparation or training; both parties emphasized how they guided and aided each other through this transition. New teachers need support regardless of the teaching modality, whether remote or in-person. The nature of teaching is so complex that without support from veteran teachers, it is extremely challenging for new educators to confidently fulfill all the roles required of teachers. This study highlights the importance of supportive mentoring relationships for both new teachers and mentors and supports the impact of an intentional statewide mentoring program.

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Cheryl Wold, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor at Northern State University in Aberdeen, SD. She primarily teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in special education. Her main research interests are all areas of special education, educator preparation programs, new teacher mentoring programs, and PK-12 education. She previously worked for many years as a special education teacher and Director of Special Education.

Dr. Andria Moon is an Associate Professor in Residence at the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay in Green Bay, Wisconsin. She has also served as a department chair and associate dean at Northern State University. Her research interests include mentoring, leadership, literacy, and educational technology.

Dr. Anna Schwan currently serves as the interim dean of the Millicent Atkins School of Education at Northern State University in Aberdeen, SD. She taught secondary English, Spanish, and ESL and was a middle school/high school administrator before journeying into higher education.

Dr. Alan Neville serves as Chief Academic Officer and Dean of Pre-Professional Studies at Presentation College. He has worked in K-12 education as a teacher and administrator and in higher education as a professor and administrator. His research interests include educational assessment, Native American studies, and teacher mentoring. He is a founding member of the South Dakota Department of Education Mentor Development Team.

Dr. Janeen Outka is a School Improvement Specialist and Technical Advisor, coaching administrators and teachers in comprehensive school improvement and strategic planning and is an adjunct instructor at Northern State University.

Appendix A

2019-20 SD Mentor Program Reflection Survey for Mentors

Which of the following best describes your mentoring partnership?

- My new teacher(s) and I teach in the SAME BUILDING in the SAME DISTRICT.
- My new teacher(s) and I teach in DIFFERENT BUILDINGS in the SAME DISTRICT.
- My new teacher(s) and I teach in DIFFERENT DISTRICTS.
- I am currently retired, but am mentoring a new teacher(s).
- I am employed by a school district in a role other than teaching and am mentoring a new teacher(s) in the same building or district.
- I am employed by a school district in a role other than teaching and am mentoring a new teacher(s) in a different district.

Which of the following best describes your mentoring partnership?

- My new teacher(s) and I have the EXACT SAME positions, for example we both teach third grade or we both teach high school orchestra.
- My new teacher(s) and I have SIMILAR positions, for example we are both elementary teachers, but I teach K and s/he teaches 4th grade, or we are both PE teachers, but I have HS and s/he has elementary.
- My new teacher(s) and I have COMPLETELY DIFFERENT positions, for example I teach foreign language and s/he teaches special education.
- I am currently retired or not teaching, but am mentoring a new teacher(s).

In your opinion, which of the following considerations is MOST important when pairing mentors with new teachers? (select only your MOST important consideration) Mentors should be paired with new teachers who. . .

- teach in the SAME SCHOOL BUILDING, regardless of content areas or grade levels.
- teach in the SAME SCHOOL DISTRICT, regardless of content areas or grade levels.
- teach the SAME OR SIMILAR CONTENT AREAS, even if they do not work in the same building or district.
- teach the SAME OR SIMILAR GRADE SPANS (like K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12), even if they do not teach in the same building or district.
- have similar personalities and interests, regardless of content areas/grade levels/building or district.

In your opinion, which of the following considerations is SECOND MOST important when pairing mentors with new teachers? (select only your SECOND MOST important consideration) Mentors should be paired with new teachers who. . .

- teach in the SAME SCHOOL BUILDING, regardless of content areas or grade levels.
- teach in the SAME SCHOOL DISTRICT, regardless of content areas or grade levels.
- teach the SAME OR SIMILAR CONTENT AREAS, even if they do not work in the same building or district.

- teach the SAME OR SIMILAR GRADE SPANS (like K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12), even if they do not teach in the same building or district.
- have similar personalities and interests, regardless of content areas/grade levels/building or district.]

Mentors and new teachers could meet face-to-face or virtually (call, text, email, FaceTime, zoom, social media tools, etc.) to meet for the required number of mentoring hours. Please indicate your preference for method of meeting with new teachers.

- I prefer to meet virtually only.
- I prefer to meet face-to-face only.
- I prefer to meet through a combination of virtual and face-to-face meetings.
- I have no preference in how mentors and new teachers meet.

Virtual mentoring benefited me by (select all that apply):
- saving time.
- reduced the amount of driving needed to complete face-to-face meetings.
- allowing us to share more resources with each other.
- allowing us to meet more frequently.
- giving us more flexibility in scheduling our meetings.
- I DID NOT participate in any virtual mentoring.
- I DID participate in virtual mentoring but did not experience any of these benefits.

In which of the following areas did you provide support/resources to your new teacher following the school shut down in spring 2020 (select all that apply):

- I provided support/resources in provided continued instruction to students.
- I provided support/resources in collaborating with colleagues and continuing professional relationships.
- I provided support/resources in continuing to build relationships with his/her students and their families.
- I DID NOT provide support/resources in the above areas.

Please provide specific examples of support/resources you provided on the above topics following the school shut down in spring 2020. If you did not provide support/resources on the above topics, indicate NA in the answer space

Appendix B

2019-20 SD Mentor Program Reflection Survey for New Teachers

Which of the following best describes your mentoring partnership?

- My mentor and I teach in the SAME BUILDING in the SAME DISTRICT.
- My mentor and I teach in DIFFERENT BUILDINGS in the SAME DISTRICT.
- My mentor and I teach in DIFFERENT DISTRICTS.
- My mentor is a retired teacher.
- My mentor is employed by a school district in a role other than teaching (like an instructional coach).
- My mentor works in a different school district in a role other than teaching (like an instructional coach).

Which of the following best describes your mentoring partnership?

- My mentor and I have the EXACT SAME positions, for example we both teach third grade or we both teach high school orchestra.
- My mentor and I have SIMILAR positions, for example we are both elementary teachers, but I teach K and s/he teaches 4th grade, or we are both PE teachers, but I have HS and s/he has elementary.
- My mentor and I have COMPLETELY DIFFERENT positions, for example I teach foreign language and s/he teaches special education.
- My mentor is a retired teacher.
- My mentor works in a position other than teaching (like an instructional coach).

In your opinion, which of the following considerations is MOST important when pairing mentors with new teachers? (select only your MOST important consideration) New should be paired with mentors who. . .

- teach in the SAME SCHOOL BUILDING, regardless of content areas or grade levels.
- teach in the SAME SCHOOL DISTRICT, regardless of content areas or grade levels.
- teach the SAME OR SIMILAR CONTENT AREAS, even if they do not work in the same building or district.
- teach the SAME OR SIMILAR GRADE SPANS (like K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12), even if they do not teach in the same building or district.
- have similar personalities and interests, regardless of content areas/grade levels/building or district.

In your opinion, which of the following considerations is SECOND MOST important when pairing mentors with new teachers? (select only your SECOND MOST important consideration) New teachers should be paired with mentors who. . .

- teach in the SAME SCHOOL BUILDING, regardless of content areas or grade levels.
- teach in the SAME SCHOOL DISTRICT, regardless of content areas or grade levels.

- teach the SAME OR SIMILAR CONTENT AREAS, even if they do not work in the same building or district.
- teach the SAME OR SIMILAR GRADE SPANS (like K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12), even if they do not teach in the same building or district.
- have similar personalities and interests, regardless of content areas/grade levels/building or district.

Mentors and new teachers could meet face-to-face or virtually (call, text, email, FaceTime, zoom, social media tools, etc.) to meet for the required number of mentoring hours. Please indicate your preference for method of meeting with new teachers.

- I prefer to meet virtually only.
- I prefer to meet face-to-face only.
- I prefer to meet through a combination of virtual and face-to-face meetings.
- I have no preference in how mentors and new teachers meet.

Virtual mentoring benefited me by (select all that apply):

- saving time.
- reduced the amount of driving needed to complete face-to-face meetings.
- allowing us to share more resources with each other.
- allowing us to meet more frequently.
- giving us more flexibility in scheduling our meetings.
- I DID NOT participate in any virtual mentoring.
- I DID participate in virtual mentoring but did not experience any of these benefits.

In which of the following areas did your mentor provide support/resources to you following the school shut down in spring 2020 (select all that apply):

- I provided support/resources in provided continued instruction to students.
- I provided support/resources in collaborating with colleagues and continuing professional relationships.
- I provided support/resources in continuing to build relationships with his/her students and their families.
- I DID NOT provide support/resources in the above areas.

Please provide specific examples of support/resources your mentor provided on the above topics following the school shut down in spring 2020. If your mentor did not provide support/resources on the above topics, indicate NA in the answer space.

A South African Rural Teacher's Experience with Technological Pedagogical Reasoning

Maxwell Tsoka, University of Venda,
Jeanne Kriek, University of South Africa, &
Byung Seo, Chicago State University

Abstract

This study sought to narrate the experiences of a digital novice South African rural teacher, using technological pedagogical reasoning (TPR). The ubiquity and pervasiveness of digital technology is creating a need for teachers to develop TPR to remain relevant in this ever-changing global teaching community. TPR is developed in the real context of a teacher's practice; hence, teachers need to have the experiences of learning to teach with technology in their actual classes. In this study, one South African rural teacher found computer simulations (CS) to be curricular materials with the potential to transform how physical sciences can be taught in South African rural schools. Their affordances are many, depending on how they can be manipulated by the user to add value to their pursuits. In addition, they have pragmatic value to the practice of South African teachers. The benefits of using CS were informed by using the technological pedagogical reasoning (TPR) framework. These affordances were relational, uncovered through an active interaction with the technology and the learners. The use of technology in teaching does not come with a pedagogical manual; hence, their use by the individual teachers is idiosyncratic. Hence, this creates a need for more research in the use of specific technology while teaching in rural schools to develop a more nuanced understanding of TPR.

Keywords: *Computer simulations, South African rural teaching, technological pedagogical reasoning*

Introduction

Schools in South African rural areas are characterized by lack of basic teaching and learning materials, classrooms with adequate furniture, computers and connectivity to the internet (Bo et al., 2018; National Education Infrastructure Management System [NEIMS], 2020). These challenges not only constrain but perpetuate the teaching of physical sciences via rote learning (Banilower et al., 2018), and it is often characterized by conditions that inhibit rather than support higher-level scientific sense-making by learners (Minner et al., 2010). Consequently, learners in South African rural schools are at a greater risk of failing due to poor meaningful learning experiences or of dropping out due to repeated failures (Hardy, 2019). Learners in South African rural schools are highly predisposed to becoming school dropouts, and their opportunities to participate in higher education are limited due to their poor performances (Abotsi et al., 2018; Imoro, 2009). In addition, learners often matriculate from high school with no long-term retention of what they learned and less interest in additional interests in science (Duncan, 2011).

It has been observed that many schools in rural areas are exposed to teaching and learning challenges that can be mitigated by technology (Nkula & Krauss, 2014; Salinas, & Sánchez, 2009). However, the question is, how are teachers going to be persuaded to integrate technology into their routine instruction to provide meaningful learning experiences for their learners? Teachers need to be responsive, in light of the evidence highlighting the efficacy and potential of technology in order to mitigate the perennial challenges that continue to plague the quality, equality and equity in rural schools (Lubin, 2018). There is evidence associating specific uses of digital technologies in teaching and learning with positive impacts on student outcomes (Tamim et al., 2011; Underwood, 2009). Therefore, teachers must pay attention to the current research. They need to be adaptive and responsive to the stimuli, adopting technology to transform their instructional practices. Collective responsiveness is necessary to improve teaching that has prioritizes learners at the heart of professional learning. Collective responsiveness requires teachers with a willingness and responsibility to reinvent themselves via classroom inquiry and knowledge production.

Teachers in rural areas are not inclined to integrate digital technology into teaching and learning (Bo et al. 2018). This situation seems to mirror the digital divide between urban and rural areas (Salinas & Sanchez, 2009). A number of reasons have been suggested as to why teachers do not integrate digital technology into their routine instruction, such as teachers' attitudes (Gilakjani & Leong, 2012), lack of technological skills to integrate technology into practice (Bang & Luft 2013), and lack of effective/adequate professional development (Walan, 2020). As a result of these issues, this study sought to narrate the responsiveness of one particular science teacher in a South African rural school who used digital technology in spite of the barriers at his school. For the purposes of this study, digital technology refers to the use of computer simulations (CS).

There is a dearth of studies in emerging market and developing economies (International Monetary Fund, 2015[1]) especially in rural areas that have reported teachers reflecting on their use of specific digital technology in situ. Whilst the term rural may refer to a geographical location, it is the economic and historical connotation that makes the term/context, an influencing factor in this study. Historical settlement policies of the apartheid government created homelands or bantustans where Africans after being disposed from their productive land, were resettled. Because of the legacy of apartheid, these contexts have a low socio-economic status characterized by poor/dysfunctional family structure, high unemployment and reliance on government social grants, high illiteracy levels, lack of basic services such as running water, electricity, sanitation, health and educational facilities, and inadequate physical and information, communication technologies infrastructure(Gardiner, 2008; Hlalele,2014;Mosimege et al, 2015). In many of the schools, where the national school nutrition program is being implemented, the food is prepared, cooked outside over fires and served outside or in classrooms that are used for learning and teaching. None of the schools have eating facilities. Many learners commute long distances to and from school every day. While some of the schools have been (re)built in recent years from brick, others still use mud structures and containers as school classrooms (Mosimege et al., 2015). As a result of the government no-fee policy on all schools in the quintile 1-3 category, of which most schools in rural areas fall, the classrooms are overcrowded with most schools having more than 45 learners per classroom (Hlalele, 2014; Gardiner, 2008). When it rains, some learners are not able to come to school because there are no bridges to cross when rivers are flooded. Unfortunately, these conditions have a bearing on rural education and their influence on schooling provision can never be underestimated. While the rural areas will always be a unique set-up, there is need for discourses/research that will not pathologize rurality. The "rural" conversation in South Africa is currently presented with deficiency scripts (Ebersöhn & Ferreira 2012), conceptualized on the basis of what rural areas "do not possess" and in many cases "will never possess" (Hlalele, 2014).

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[1] World economic and financial surveys-October 2015/ www.imf.org/eternal/pubs/ft/weo/2015/02/weodata/groups.htm#cc

Not many studies tend to recognize rural public schools and their teachers as places and people of innovation and alternative pedagogical effectiveness (Tembrevilla, 2020). Hence, little attention is paid to the potentially positive aspects of rural teaching and the potentially positive experiences of rural teachers that may impact learning (Buckler, 2011). There is need to reject deficit discourses that are often portrayed and fail to go beyond recognizing schools in rural areas as disadvantaged. Teachers working in rural areas are individuals who should be considered to have free will to create their own world and not to have their fate determined by their social context (Elder, 1994). The debate within the education circle (irrespective of context) has shifted from *whether* to *how* teachers should integrate technology in their routine instruction in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century and make education relevant, responsive, and effective for anyone, anywhere, anytime (Haddad & Draxler, 2002). Hence, how teachers are responsive to this phenomenon in rural context is worth researching and is the focus of this study.

Teaching with digital technology is wisdom of practice (Shulman, 1987) which is developed during integration in the real-world messiness of everyday classroom practice. Smart (2016) refers to it as technological pedagogical reasoning (TPR). The argument of this study is that teachers with developed TPR are inclined to successfully integrate digital technology seamlessly into their instructional practice. Increasing experience of teaching with technology makes science teachers feel more self-efficacious for using digital technology in their classrooms (Yerdelen-Damar et al., 2017). With a developed TPR, teachers are able to make decisions on the appropriate combination of instructional design and classroom orchestration (Magana et al., 2021). For the purposes of this study, TPR is a process where teachers make use of the identified affordances of digital technology as they carry out instructional activities for the purposes of facilitating learning. It is a robust nascent concept that continues to evolve due to the ever-changing face of technology, a concept that distinguishes the teacher from other professionals. TPR is both a creative and idiosyncratic process intended to potentially transform content as prescribed in the curriculum policy document into formats that are readily accessible to specific learners in their contexts. Also related to this goal is the idea that curriculum materials are seldom packaged to be intrinsically motivating, nor presented in any way to be particularly meaningful or relevant to the learners' daily lives or purposes (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In this transformation process, digital technology is expected to plays a mediatory role to enhance content transformation. Research on TPR helps to understand teachers' actions (both seen and unseen) and how these mediated actions support learning. There is no universal approach to teaching with technology, and in most contexts, the practical implementation of technology in teaching is largely left to individual teachers (Tallvid, 2015). Through TPR, a teacher's knowledge, skills, judgements and analysis in decision-making processes are manifested and can be studied (Holmberg, Fransson & Fors, 2017). This makes the process amenable to theorization.

Therefore, this study seeks to answer the question: How does a South African rural teacher's experience technological pedagogical reasoning (TPR)?

Computer simulations (CS) are interactive computer programs that are designed to represent or model a particular scientific phenomenon. Computer simulations are emerging learning technologies that research has evinced their efficacy in the teaching and learning of science (Bo et al., 2018). They have the potential to transform teaching practices and afford learners the opportunity to learn physical sciences in an inquiry-oriented approach (Minner et al., 2010). Their potential is realized when they are used with others to achieve a pedagogical purpose (Milner-Bolotin, 2016). These simulations can be used as a medium for communication, inquiry or for motivation purposes (Gonczi et al., 2016; Plass et al., 2012). They present content-as-animated pictures (CAP), visual representations of dynamic theoretical entities that are critical for understanding why matter behaves as observed (Ardac & Akaygun, 2004; Honey & Hilton, 2011). However, their use within schools in rural areas is to a large extent minimal and without clearly defined purpose (Bo et al., 2018). To properly design learning interventions using CS, and more importantly, how to actually adopt, adapt and integrate them in instructional practice for specific audiences and contexts, is a complex task (Kriek & Coetzee, 2021).

As a result of the pervasiveness of digital technology inside and outside the school, teaching with technology is the sine qua non for the 21st century teacher. However, TPR is a new phenomenon that has been triggered by the invasion of digital technology into the education landscape. It is thus a nascent phenomenon that involves the teachers' use of technology to leverage curriculum adaptation, planning and enactment. This integration is a positive departure from the kind of teaching and learning that has typified physical science education in rural South Africa. It is intended to enhance the quality of learning experiences to make science lessons more meaningful and appealing to learners.

Technological Pedagogical Reasoning (TPR)

This study employed Smart's (2016) model of technological reasoning as both a theoretical and analytical framework (Figure 1). This framework was deemed applicable as it guides the novice teacher on which actions/aspects of teaching to execute using the potential affordances of digital technology. It thus can serve as a model for self-directed professional development. The framework also identifies components of the knowledge base for teaching which influences and guides TPR.

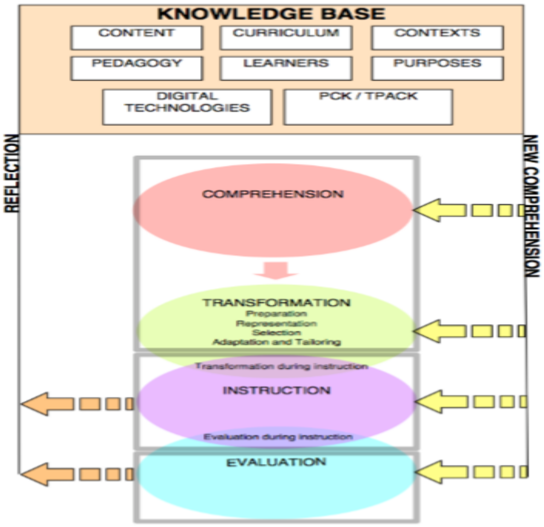
KNOWLEDGE BASE
CONTENT
CURRICULUM
CONTEXTS
PEDAGOGY
LEARNERS
PURPOSES
DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES
PCK / TPACK
REFLECTION
NEW COMPREHENSION
COMPREHENSION
TRANSFORMATION
Preparation
Representation
Selection
Adaptation and Tailoring
Transformation during instruction
INSTRUCTION
Evaluation during instruction
EVALUATION

Figure 1: *Smart's Model of Technological Pedagogical Reasoning* (2016, p. 300)

Shulman (1987) refers to pedagogical reasoning as a set of cognitive sub-process undertaken by teachers when they transform the content into formats that are accessible to learners. The sub-processes are: comprehension; transformation; instruction; evaluation; reflection and new comprehension. There are overlapping processes that have also been identified by Smart (2016) namely: transformation-during-instruction and evaluation-during-instruction. Therefore, TPR is the integration of technology to carry out these sub-processes.

Comprehension

As argued by Shulman (1987), to teach is to understand the content as outlined in the curriculum statement (syllabus). Previously, this process involved searching for content in the textbooks since books were the major teaching tool to access scientific material (Moreno et al., 2001). However, web-based resources are increasingly becoming popular and readily accessible for retrieving information useful for teaching purposes. Thus, the digital resources that teachers can access and select for inclusion in a learning environment are becoming enormous. The search for content is no longer restricted to only textbooks, but it involves the search for relevant and appropriate virtual simulations on the internet to address the content as prescribed in the curriculum document. Computer simulation visuals present teachers with the opportunity to understand new content developments when compared to textbook presentation. As a South African rural teacher who is writing his experience with the digital technology, CS presents teachers with an opportunity to engage with content/ideas in an interactive way which opens epistemic agency in learners.

Transformation

In the transformation process, the disciplinary content is to be "educationally reconstructed" (Duit et al., 1996, p. 36) or what is called contextual reconstruction a critical process necessary for teaching. The process of contextual reconstruction is concerned with *contextualization of content*, transforming the content as prescribed in the curriculum statement into a format suitable for teaching and learning in that context. Shulman (1987) conceptualized transformation as four sub-processes: critical interpretation (preparation), representation, selection and adaptation and tailoring. Today, some of the sub-processes of transformation have been eliminated by the use of technology. The selection of suitable computer simulations is one way to transform the content as well as adapting and tailoring it to the needs of the learners. This selection of computer simulation refers to the action of the teacher in purposefully choosing and adopting computer simulations from diverse websites in order to accomplish the lesson objectives. Also, the process of selecting computer simulations is an attempt to "scrutinize" the teaching material in order to decide whether it is fit to be taught and if it is not, to decide how it could be "made more suitable for teaching" (Shulman, 1987, p.16).

Transformation-during-Instruction

Initially, Smart (2016) refers to transformation-during-instruction (T-d-I) as occurring when teachers have to adopt contingency plans and change learning activities temporarily or permanently due to failure of working of digital technologies. However, T-d-I occurs even when there is no failure in working of technology. For example, learners can ask questions with ideas which are or are not directly related to the content under consideration. Teachers need to respond to such questions and clarify the ideas that learners would have stated. In other instances, teachers need to link the ideas of the current lesson with ideas from previous or future lessons. These cases are considered as T-d-I

Instruction

In this context, the term "instruction" will simply be defined as all activities (both cognitive and physical) undertaken by teachers and learners which have the intent of learning new information (Beauchamps, 2011). Technology could play a transformative role by enabling teachers to exploit a wide range of interactive opportunities with learners during instruction. It could transform the way the teacher organizes and manages the classroom while enhancing classroom communication and the interaction with learners. During instruction, there are varying levels of CSs that can be used by teachers depending on their experience and skills

Evaluation-During-Instruction

Smart (2016) also identified the overlapping of evaluation and instruction which she terms evaluation-during-instruction (E-d-I). E-d-I occurs when the teacher either probes for prior knowledge or when the teacher moves around the classroom checking for understanding.

Evaluation

The boundary between evaluation and instruction is usually vague and difficult to delineate. An assessment of learning and how the teaching is progressing is usually on-going and not left until the end of instruction. Using CS enables teachers to execute several approaches to evaluate learners' learning. These include asking direct questions to individuals, groups and/or whole class; peer evaluation; and moving around the room and watching over learners (Smart, 2016). These approaches are examples of E-d-I. In contexts where schools have adequate digital technological infrastructure, teachers use these technologies to check learners' assignments and provide feedback, and learners can use digital technologies to prepare and submit assignments. However, in impoverished schools, this ability is not feasible.

Reflection

Reflective reasoning is equivalent to what Schön (1983) called reflection-on-action. In this phase, the teacher looks back at the teaching and learning that has occurred and reconstruct, re-enact and/or recapture the critical events, emotions and accomplishments or failures to derive pedagogical shifts in their planning and instructional phases. Based on the pedagogical shifts gained, the teacher may reconstruct and/or re-enact part of the practice in future cycles (Shulman, 1987). Smart (2016) reports that many experienced teachers' reflections focused on their successes of using new digital technologies or of using new digital technologies in the classroom for the first time. Though teachers have no regular formal processes for recording reflection, reflections can enlighten all aspects of pedagogical reasoning.

New Comprehension

New comprehension is the new insights gained after a successful pedagogical reasoning cycle. The new comprehension now informs the new cycle of pedagogical reasoning. Teacher gains new insights (pedagogical shift) into his teaching through reflecting on the acts of comprehension, transformation, instruction and evaluation. These insights usher in a new understanding of content to be taught, of students, of purposes, of self and of the process of teaching itself (Geddis & Wood, 1997). New comprehensions consist of all that was learned from the cycle of pedagogical reasoning processes and how things might be done differently. Obtaining new comprehension also takes into account the selected approach, environmental situations, emotions experienced by students and by the teacher, and other such internal and external factors (Nyamupangedengu, 2017). This new comprehension usually does not come immediately or after the reflection stage; it normally takes longer (Shulman, 1987).

Methodology

The use of CS was a new phenomenon to the lead author. Therefore, he wanted opportunities to reflect on the use of the technology in real time. The research design used in the study is action research (AR). This study was completed in three iterations over a period of three years with three different classes. In all of the classes, the topic of instruction was electromagnetism. This topic was chosen based on the previous experiences of the lead author and other researchers where they found that learners had challenges with understanding concepts in electromagnetism (Zenda, 2016).

Data sources were the reflective journals of the lead author, classroom observations by external researchers and peer teachers, focus group discussions with learners, and artifacts such as lesson plans and curricular documents. The use of many data sources was to triangulate data for enhanced validity.

The sub-processes of Smart's (2016) model of TPR were used as codes. The use of pre-codes was influenced by the use of technology in teaching, which was a new phenomenon to the lead author; hence, he wanted to reflect on the use of CS on those common aspects of the teacher thinking processes as identified in literature.

Results

Comprehension

The teacher consulted the curriculum document (CAPS) (South Africa Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2011) for the content to be taught and this resulted in formulating the objectives of the lesson because these objectives were not provided to South African teachers. As the lead author interacted with the document, he was disturbed and confused by the significance of DBE assigning only six hours to the teaching of the topic. Many questions came to the teacher's mind that needed answers:

> What did the curriculum planners consider when allocating the topic six hours? Are learners constrained to understand the topic in six hours? Do learners have the same capacity to

> understand the topic in six hours? If the learners didn't understand the content in six hours, what's next? Is the six hours also allowing time for preparation?

Whilst the teacher was the one asking these questions, he also felt challenged because he was unable to answer them. If the six hours were the time to cover the described content, it would assume that the teacher was going to be teaching a homogenous class of learners. Furthermore, by stipulating the time, the focus is now on the content and not on the learners. The teacher also inquired from a colleague about his interpretation of the six hours and he did not get a satisfactory response.

Transformation

After getting an understanding of the content to be taught, the teacher was now prepared for the second stage which was the transformation of the content into formats that would be accessible to learners. This process involved a series of actions that included searching the internet for suitable computer simulation suites, planning practical activities to involve learners and how the activities could be sequenced and finally drafting the lesson plan. The selection of computer simulations was a critical process because these computer simulations were not designed for the physical sciences curriculum for South Africa. Teachers' search behaviours and selection practices becomes critical to provide teachers with readily available, and useful, online CS (Burron & Pegg, 2021). The selection of CS was based on a particular criterion. Introducing these criteria supported the teacher in selecting those simulations needed to cover the prescribed content, whilst at the same time adapting and tailoring the content to meet the needs of the learners. The criteria for these simulations are:

- Relate to the electromagnetism concepts prescribed in the CAPS document. This consideration is important for the achievement of the objectives of the lesson and the integration between the animations and the curriculum for the success of the animations (Barak & Dori, 2011).
- Present 3D representations, which promote learners' spatial visualization ability thereby enhancing learners' understanding by "providing a degree of reality unattainable in a traditional two-dimensional interface" (Kim et al., 2001, p. 38). Interactive 3D simulations have the potential to enhance learners' conceptual development of the basic science phenomena (Huang et al., 2015)
- Depict the dynamic, transient and interactive nature of scientific phenomena (Wu & Shah, 2004).
- Link the macro-processes with the micro-processes.
- Provide affordances that enable learners to interact with the animation and manipulate variables and entities (Akpınar 2014; Velazquez-Marcano et al., 2004; Wilkerson-Jerde et al., 2015)
- Link abstract concepts to real-world examples (Kozhevnikov & Thornton 2006; Wang et al., 2014)
- Be suitable for the learners and support the learning experience.

The transformation stage is very important as it ensures that content has been reduced into formats/representations that enables learners to potentially develop an in-depth understanding of that content and develop key skills. Transformation is intended to enhance the learners' process of transformation- how learners make sense of the new information with respect to their prior knowledge, resulting in restructuring it for meaning making.

Transformation-During-Instruction

Among the suites of computer simulations that were selected, none could be found that was suitable to demonstrate the magnetic field around a loop. It was therefore necessary to use the CS that was used earlier to demonstrate the magnetic field around two straight conductors. The reason for using this CS suite as written in this reflective journal was because

> I could not find a suitable computer simulation to demonstrate the magnetic field around a loop and so I decided to use this computer simulation of two parallel lines with current flowing in opposite directions to demonstrate the field around a loop. It really worked because the magnetic fields are the same around a loop and around two parallel wires with current flowing in opposite directions. In this computer simulation changes in the values of current could be made and learners can observe the outcome or feedback and be able to generate a hypothesis, draw conclusions or formulate a model (August 2015).

Transformation-during-Instruction is evidence of the contingent nature of teaching (Forzani, 2014), which requires in-the-moment action/decision-making.

Instruction

During the instructional phase, the computer simulations were projected on a white screen which was at the front of the room, so that they could be used in a whole-class setting. The teacher manipulated the simulations for two reasons. Firstly, learners were not familiar with this learning tool and had no learning experiences with them in previous classes. Secondly, the teacher wanted to guide learners to the important concepts that they had to understand. Through the manipulation of computer simulations, the teacher was able to deliberately change and vary the way of asking questions. Every move/manipulation of the simulation was a source/initiator of a question. Hence, the teacher moved away from the traditional South African practice of dictating notes while learners were passively copying the notes. On the contrary, the ensuing dialogue resulted in a pattern of interaction where the teacher initiated the questions for discussion, the learners responded, and the teacher sought for the confirmation of the response from other learners. The questions required learners to give more elaborate answers. Noted in his reflective journal:

> The discussions I had with the learners gave me an opportunity to elicit their ideas and to understand their thinking. I am particularly excited with the communicative power of computer simulations. They provide an environment for exploration through dialogue and questioning opportunities. When asking a question, I no longer need to evaluate whether the response is correct or wrong myself, other learners are able to confirm if it is wrong or correct**.** This makes the teacher no longer the arbiter, but multiple learner voices are allowed to speak. However, where it was necessary, I was called to correct wrong ideas that learners may have (August, 2015).

While reflecting on the prior reflection (retro-reflection), the lead author realized an interesting approach to questioning[2], which was shaped by the use of computer simulations. This approach was an attempt to move away from a monologue and authoritative discourse to a more inclusive and dialogic discourse. The attempt to open the dialogic space was motivated by the desire to involve learners in knowledge-building processes. From a learner's perspective, dialogic teaching affords them with greater epistemic agency (Ko & Krist, 2018), resulting in authorship, meaning and more equitable opportunities to learn (Resnick, Asterhan & Clarke, 2015).

Evaluation-During-Instruction

The responses by learners to the teacher's questions showed that computer simulations were very helpful as evidenced in the following excerpt. The responses showed learners who were able to read and interpret the computer graphical displays.

> Learners were able to give valid descriptions of the magnetic field around the current-carrying conductors. One learner was able to give a description, which I had not anticipated. He said that the field was non-uniform as evidenced by the fact that the circles were not equidistant, with the field lines near the conductor very close together while those far from the conductor were farther apart. He even suggested that the field was, therefore, stronger near the conductor while weak far away from the conductor. I perceive that computer simulations can provide supportive guides which assist learners against going astray both scientifically and operationally (Reflective journal, August 2015).

It is therefore important to encourage learners to rely on their own experience as opposed to solely depend on the utterances of teachers. This increases learning, creativity, and insight on the part of learners (Barzouka et al., 2015). It is therefore critical to highlight that the role of the teacher when using CS is now skewed towards "highlighting authentic and relevant information, providing sufficient background material and following up by providing novel insights, interpretations and perspectives" (Sitaraman, 2021, p. 2).

New Comprehension

Selection of various CS is an important process of transforming content. It enhances the comprehensibility of content since different CS have different features which can be used to adapt and tailor the content to the requirements of the curriculum. Noted in his reflective journal:

> The various prompts and cues that are found within some computer simulations are intended to adapt and tailor our lessons to the needs of learners. Some of the computer simulations on the internet are meant to be used by learners in high schools as well as students in college or university (August 2015).

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2. The following serves as an example. In a lesson on electromagnetic induction, instead of telling them what happens when a magnet is moved towards the solenoid, I asked them what their observations were when the magnet is moved towards the solenoid. It was not only the lighting of the bulb they referred to but also the moving of the electrons. The question does not require a yes/no. Instead, requires the learner to verbalise and express their thoughts in their own words. The role of the teacher, in this case, is to participate in learners' discussion as a peer and to co-construct knowledge with the learners.

The process of searching for new CS is ongoing since there are new CS with new features that are developed and designed. The selected computer simulations used in this lesson had limitations. It was not possible to change some of the variables for learners to observe the effect, for example, on the magnitude of the magnetic field, when the current is varied. Learners were therefore unable to hypothesise the relationship between current and magnetic field on their own.

Computer simulations are not only the medium to display the content but also the medium through which the content is delivered. These simulations provide supportive and engaging multimedia features that permits content to be displayed pictorially and not through the use of abstract text. Thus, computer simulations can display content-as-animated pictures (CAP), a new learning affordance available to learners in schools in South African rural areas. At the same time, CS allow the teacher to engage in dialogic talk with the learners as they explore the various graphical representations caused by changes to the initial state of the computer simulations. It has both pragmatic and epistemic value. The teacher no longer relies on the textbook as the only curricular material when sourcing for content. The lead author found CS graphically illustrated scientific phenomena better than explanations by the teacher, textbook or any other curriculum material. No matter how well a teacher explains scientific phenomena, the effect on student learning is not the same as when learners view it using CS. Other curricular materials do not explicitly demonstrate the dynamic nature of scientific phenomenon in the manner that CS do.

Discussion

Computer simulations are essential curricular materials and epistemic tools that teachers working in unique contexts such as schools in rural areas can adopt and adapt to design tasks of teaching (Ball, 2000), which can engage learners in meaningful learning as opposed to rote learning. Keeping in mind, these rural areas still lack clean running water, classrooms, furniture, electricity, libraries, textbooks, laboratories, computers, and connectivity to the internet. Smart's (2016) model identifies these tasks of teaching. As curricular material, CS has potential affordances to guide/influence teachers' curriculum adaptation, planning, and enactments, because CS are not only the source of content but also the medium through which the same content is made accessible to learners. As a tool that can be used to engage learners in knowledge construction practices, it also qualifies as an epistemic medium (Miettinen & Virkkunen, 2005). The use of the term "medium" is consistent with Romiszowski's (1988) conceptualization of medium as a carrier of messages, from some transmitting source to the receiver of the message (p. 8). The selection of a number of computer simulations provides affordances that assist the teacher in meeting the content requirements of the curriculum while at the same time tailoring the content to the needs of the learners. It is important to note that not all simulations have the same features. It is therefore important for teachers to know how they can manipulate (T-d-I) the available CS in the event that there is no suitable one to demonstrate the concept. The CS leverages the interrogative ability of the teacher in that every move/manipulation of the simulation is an initiator of a question. Engaging learners through dialogue is an intentional attempt of opening up dialogic space in classroom interactions thereby encouraging learners "to be authors and producers of knowledge, with ownership over it, rather than mere consumers of it" (Engle & Conant, 2002, p. 404). The use of computer simulations "stimulate language use" (Tomlison, 2003, p. 2), namely the language of science. One of the general aims of the CAPS (section 1.3 d) (DBE, 2011), is to develop learners who are able to communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes. Thus, CSs can be used by teachers to engage learners to communicate science ideas using terms/words that are familiar to them. The affordances of CS present teachers with opportunities of opening up aspects of their curriculum (Ko & Krist, 2018), a practice that allow learners to be part of the knowledge- building processes. Learners are then positioned as collaborators in co-constructing knowledge as opposed to passive consumers. This kind of learning is the emphasis of current reforms in science education to support learners' deep sense-making through their participation in science knowledge-building practices (National Research Council, 2012).

TPR is an attempt to make sense of how the affordances of digital technology can be appropriated to leverage tasks of teaching in a particular context. Thus, the manifestation of TPR indexes the conception of teaching/learning that teachers hold. Not a one-off event, it is a process that is negotiated and intricately linked to the qualities of interactions among the teacher, learners, content and CS. The teacher makes sense of the potential affordances of digital technology by reflecting on the use of the digital technology in- and on-action as they interact with the learners and content. It is important that professional development of teachers should enable them to have opportunities to reflect on their actions and how they affect learning. Practical knowledge is developed through a reflection on their accounts of experiences, which are individually, continuous and situated in cultural and social contexts (Han & Feng, 2015). However, teachers, rarely have an opportunity for reflective analysis on their instructional methods (Cohen & Hill, 1998; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). As a result, teachers in rural schools lack a deliberate process for developing contextual, practical knowledge to address the challenges they encounter, and at the same time, engaging teachers in learning about teaching with technology.

Finally, TPR is not a phenomenon only focused on teachers but learners as well. There has been criticism of models of pedagogical reasoning as being only teacher centered. This criticism fails to recognize the inherent purpose of TPR, which is to design and create meaningful learning experiences for learners. Thus, TPR results in new comprehensions, a common feature on all models of pedagogical reasoning, in new knowledge, attitudes, and skills (KAS). The intended outcome is the creation learning environments that support learners' understanding of scientific concepts by appropriating the affordances of digital technology. For South African rural teachers, TPR can be conceptualized as having the following phases: Plan, Enact, Review, and New Comprehension. These phases are depicted in Figure 2:

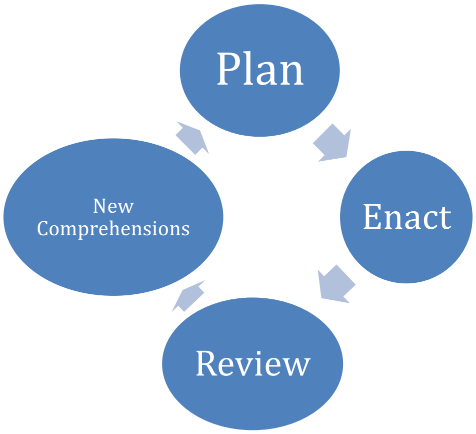

Figure 2: *Model of Technological Pedagogical Reasoning for a South African Rural Teacher*

During the planning phase, the teacher designs the lesson activities as informed by the curriculum policy, which involves searching for the CS that can be used to deliver the prescribed content. The action of designing learning activities is an attempt to transform the prescribed content to be intrinsically motivating and made to be particularly meaningful or relevant to the learners' daily lives or purposes (Ryan & Deci, 2017). For example, a learner commented,

> …we never knew that magnet can induce current and that current can be induced by magnetism, so it really taught us a lot. Now we know that maybe if we want a magnet, and we don't have a magnet we [can] use current to induce magnetism…

Learners become motivated as they can see relevance in the knowledge they are gaining.

The enactment phase involves the teacher interacting with learners using CS to engage with the chosen content. Within the enactment phase are important sub-phases such as transformation-during-enactment and evaluation-during-enactment. Transformation-during-enactment is an instance when the teacher is compelled to makes on-the-spot instructional changes because of unplanned circumstances that might derail the flow of the lesson. Evaluation-during-enactment is when the teacher assesses learners to check their level of comprehension or the difficulties that learners might be encountering to understand the content. The review phase involves the teacher reflecting on what transpired during the enactment phase: what went right or wrong, or areas that can be further improved. The insight gathered from the reflection on the lesson forms the teacher's new comprehensions. Thus, the new comprehensions should include new knowledge, attitudes and skills. This model includes the routine basic tasks of teaching for teachers in South African rural areas.

Conclusion

Mastery experiences are critical to the development of TPR as they provide teachers with the opportunity to identify/discover potential affordances of digital technology they can manipulate for instructional purposes. Such learning experiences are not only professional but also authentic and embedded in subject matter and connected to the teachers' own practice. The ability to identify potential affordances is an active sense-making and problem-solving process during which the teacher interacts with the learners, and the learners interact with the teacher. Thus, TPR is influenced by digital technology, and at the same time, it influences the way that digital technology is used within particular contexts. TPR is idiosyncratic and cannot be cloned. Digital technology is not the silver bullet to all the challenges in teaching; it does not possess inherent instructional value. It is the concerned teacher who ascribes value that digital technology adds to the teaching and learning processes. Successful use depends on what the teachers concerned intend to achieve, even when teaching the same content. The authors suggest that it is here where South African researchers, policy makers and administrators are incorrect. It is not that teachers are recalcitrant to the pedagogical use of digital technology. There is an attempt and inclination by researchers/policy-makers to force teachers to use particular ways of digital technology use that have been reported/suggested to generally work elsewhere in a different context. As a result, there is no consideration to the contexts of the concerned teachers and the instructional value they intend to derive from the use of specific technology. Teachers have different goals for integrating technology in their instructional practices. South African science teachers should be encouraged and supported to design their signature teaching approaches using technology in ways that addresses their concerns and contexts. In this way, South African teachers have learning opportunities to further improve their practice while at the same time developing practical knowledge relevant to their contexts. Despite the challenges that South African rural schools continue to endure, CS is both pedagogical and epistemic tools, a resource that can be used by teachers to leverage curriculum adaptation, planning, and enactment. These curricular materials are at the disposal of teachers in South African rural areas to transform the learning environment/pedagogy from one of vulnerability to one of resilience.

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Dr. Maxwell Tsoka is a lecturer at the University of Venda, Department of Professional & Curriculum Studies. He has over 20 years of experience as a high school science teacher interested in physics education, using computer simulations in teaching, professional development, autoethnography, and rural education.

Professor Jeanne Kriek is a professor in the Department of Physics at the University of South Africa. Her research interest is physics education more focusing on the use of technology in teaching and learning physics. She has considerable international recognition for the high quality and impact of her recent research outputs.

Dr. Byung-In Seo is a professor at Chicago State University, Department of Advanced Studies in Education. There, she has taught courses from freshman-level Introduction to Teaching to doctoral-level Curriculum and Instructional Theory. Her research interests focus on improving instructional methods at the secondary, undergraduate, and graduate levels.

Caribbean Vision, West Indian Practice: Conflicts of Edutocracy and Elitism in Education Reform

Stacy L. Denny, The University of the West Indies

Abstract

This research seeks to understand the outcome of decades of education reform initiatives in the West Indies. Utilising the Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA) method, official public documents were collected through web and catalogue searches. Dominant themes were identified through manual and electronic coding using MaxQDA software. These emergent themes were examined through the lens of the edutocracy and elite theories to provide more in-depth analysis of this research problem. The document analysis constructed a narrative of how colonial ideology embedded within the inherited West Indian educational system runs counter to the progressive and more humanist visions and missions envisaged for present-day Caribbean education, culminating in deleterious conflicts between educational theory and practice. This work therefore concludes that there has been little substantive Caribbean education reform owing to the significant gaps between early twenty-first century, and even earlier drafted education visions, and current education practice

Keywords: *edutocracy, elite theory, Caribbean education reform, colonialism, ideology*

Introduction

There have been several education reform initiatives in the West Indies over the past few decades, which do not appear to have resulted in any substantive change to the system (Tsang et al., 2002; Jules, 2015; Brissett, 2021). The West Indies herein refer to the Anglophone CARICOM states (appendix 1). Research shows that West Indian (WI) governments have taken a piecemeal approach to systemic change, which has not addressed the perpetual challenges in education; namely, poor quality education, high drop-out and repetition rates, high failure rates and outdated curricula (Tsang et al., 2002; Williams, 2012; Hackett, 2004; Fiszbein & Stanton, 2018). Admittedly, these are severe educational problems, but the real issue, I premise, is the racist, classist and hegemonic principles, values, and ideologies built under the system as a stabilizing force and weaved into the fabric of the colonially inherited WI education structure. I use the term West Indian deliberately to show that education in this region still mimics the colonial model, and so I speak of the WI education system monolithically despite the territories being separate sovereign states. This is because it shares several core identical characteristics in policy and practice across these islands. Denny (2020) highlights these similarities; namely, the largely academic monolingual school system operating in primarily bi/multidialectal WI settings, which is predominantly characterized by high-stakes assessment in English, academism, chalk and talk, text-book-driven curricula, teacher-centered approaches and passive learners (p. 2). For context, most WIs in the Anglophone Caribbean speak a dialect of English, a creolized or decreolized version, but are expected to learn and use solely English in schools based on a mostly implicit language-in-education policy, as this vernacular issue is not treated directly in most official Caribbean education documents (Denny, 2013). Notably, the practice of high-stakes national assessment at the primary level, known as the Common Entrance across the region, sorts students into prestigious high-achieving and low-achieving secondary schools, while regional secondary exams, delivered by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), result annually in a meagre 0.01% of WI students attaining national government scholarships to overwhelmingly prestigious overseas universities (Denny, 2021). A major issue this research therefore seeks to address is why after decades of education reforms do these prejudicial practices still exist, so that despite a rhetoric around equity, there appears to be little substantive change in the WI education institutional system. Similar questions of resistant institutional change have been researched regionally around the narrative of economic institutional persistence (Acemoglu et al., 2021; Roland, 2020); yet few researchers have specifically explored the issue of colonial persistence in the education system of the post-colonies (Viegi, 2016). This research therefore aims to fill that gap by contending that substantive educational change will result from educational stakeholders peering *beneath* the system, at its foundation, and comprehensively exploring the genesis of WI education from the level of the plantocratic ideologies shaped by a racist, colonialist Anglo-European minority and inherited unchecked and unquestioned by Afro-WI education managers. Past reform approaches seem to target only the observable symptoms of the educational problems, and so a new approach which explores the *sources* of these symptoms is required for more meaningful understanding of the issues under reform. I therefore propose an examination of the impact of colonial ideology on WI education development, through the lens of the edutocracy and elite theories as a more productive alternative approach to answering the overarching research question.

This work therefore starts from the premise that present day WI education reform, through its planning, policies and classroom practices, continues the trend of schooling to produce an academic elite. In so doing, the current system is still largely influenced by the colonial education model (Viegi, 2016) which had little intention of creating a mass literate non-White society, but rather of producing an educated elite to continue its work of colonial dominance in the absence of its masters. I therefore posit that reform has failed to bring about substantive change and will not do so if this underlying ideology of education for elite selection is not first addressed. This practice of educative selection is evidenced by the fact that the overwhelming majority of passes in regional exams is at the lowest acceptable level, grade 3. In addition, approximately 40% of WI students fail the English language competency exam yearly (see cxc.org) despite some twelve years of "language learning". In speaking to the level of failure, Glenroy Cumberbatch, a recently retired CXC Registrar admits to a worrying trend of some nearly 20% (over 11, 000 out of 60, 000) failing to acquire a *single* pass in the regional exams, making it difficult, he laments, to produce people in the region who are employable ("Too Many Performing Poorly", 2018). Another former Registrar of CXC, Didacus Jules (2015), insists that the problem with WI education reform is that it ignores history by maintaining a regional exam structure that assumes that the principal function of education is to sort and classify people based on academic intelligence. This study therefore explores WI education reform to understand why decades of reform initiatives seem to meet with resistant systemic change (Jules, 2015; Williams, 2012; Miller, 2014). This issue is especially important at a time when Barbados, an exemplar of WI education, has as recently as April 2021, created an Education Reform Unit, to "facilitate the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the reform initiatives that will be aimed at transforming the education sector" (Government Information Service, 2021, para. 6). This study is therefore timely, as its findings can contribute to providing research-driven guidance to WI education reformists beyond tackling the observable educational symptoms.

Literature Review

WI education reform did not truly begin until the 1950s, just prior to the independence era in the 1960s to 1980s (Layne, 1999; Miller, 1999; Coates, 2012) because this was a time of advocating for mass education, and so reforms were catering to this influx. Miller (1999) explains that a rhetoric around nation building saw the newly independent people unifying around education for the Black masses, resulting in a paradigm shift which led to almost universal access at the primary level, extended access at the secondary level and expanded tertiary level education in the region. Despite these early achievements, there is great dissatisfaction with the system currently; as such, Miller (1999), asks why. Scholars like Coates (2012) observes that two hundred years after British colonial rule "the educational systems within CARICOM states continue to reflect the academic traditions of their former colonizer" (p. 347). Essentially, education reform has not caught up with social change because the system continues to mimic British academic institutions which promote highly competitive, selective schooling that is unresponsive to the region's needs (Hunte, 1976). Others argue that the failure of the academized system to promote equality and equity is the real problem, because despite barriers being lowered, they have never truly been removed (Miller, 1999). There has been success in expanding access, but not the kind of access that has resulted in student retention and acquisition of multiple literacies necessary for social mobility (Fiszbein & Stanton, 2018; Hackett, 2004; Miller, 2014). These seminal works suggest that the goals of WI education have not always been strategically directed towards social development. I agree, but also contend that the myopic view of educational goals originating from our inherited colonial education training teaches us as WIs that education is about curriculum, academia, and assessment; namely, systems and processes (Bewaji, 2008) rather than people. This focus has led to recurring attempts at fixing the observable broken education processes and systems like shoring up the number of trained teachers for better examination outcomes, replacing culturally inadequate texts, and revamping foreign-based curricula and assessments. Yet, the indoctrination and the inherent unquestioned ideologies of the *people* behind the systems and processes might well be at the core of addressing the education reform issue. This is what Denny (2021) alluded to in the description of her newly developed theory of edutocracy in the region. I therefore propose in this work to explore the role of this theory in WI education reform.

Edutocracy

Denny (2021) describes edutocracy theoretically as a combination of education and plantocracy. It is a theory of dependency, reliance on Western ideas, knowledge, services, systems, and policies based on ideologies promoting intellectual hegemony, academic power, and legitimacy of imperial knowledge (Bristol, 2010; Best, 1968). It is also a socio-psychological theory grounded in the inner plantation theory (Brathwaite, 1975), illuminating how the impact of the creole education institution on the psyche of the Afro-WI has left many feeling like failures. It is also a theory of plantation pedagogy, mainly a practice of hopelessness and oppression (Bristol,

2010) in the forms of domineering top-down management practices and imposed foreign education policies of international funding agencies (Denny, 2021). Edutocracy is captured as an amalgamation of these three theories in figure 1.

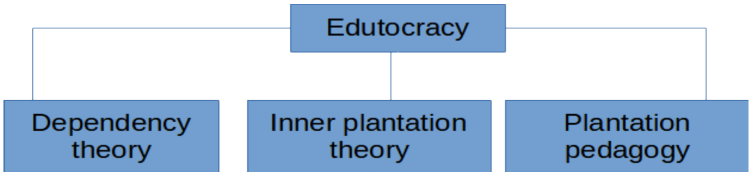

Figure 1: *Concise Model of Edutocracy*

In my experience as a WI educator, teacher trainer and researcher, I can concretize Denny's (2021) theory of edutocracy in terms of education committees devoid of teacher representation, policies of monolingualism in bidialectal pedagogical contexts and high-stakes academic assessments at stipulated ages, regardless of students' levels of competency or readiness. These practices reflect a theory of edutocracy which demonstrates how the practice of WI education creates and preserves an "educated bourgeoisie, [who] would be content to take on the role of business agent for the West, accumulating wealth, supporting ethnic interests, and behaving like the former colonizer, complicit in neo-colonialism" (Enslin, 2017, p. 6), essentially, the new Afro-WI plantocracy. The discourse around edutocracy reads as conflict between colonial education ideology and Caribbean ideal visions for contemporary education. It is also articulated as contradictions between the espousal of democratic principles and anti-democratic education practices (Williams, 2012). This conflict suggests, that while educationists have done laudable work in education reform regarding physical access to schooling, they have failed to progress in addressing issues of (1) access to school language and curricula content for most dialectal speakers, (2) student retention and (3) certification of competency. Instead of simply asking what challenges are we facing in WI education and why (Miller, 1999), we must now ask, "What challenges do we *continue* to face in WI education and why do we *continue* to face them despite decades of 'reforms'"? A theoretical analysis is a more productive start to understanding the problem at its core. The answers appear impossible to be unearthed with concrete initiatives (money and material resources), because they are rooted in intangible complexities (theories and ideologies).

Elite Theory in Education

Elite theory is grounded in the work of Italian scholars Mosca, (1896), Pareto (1916) and Michels (1911/1962) working in the fields of sociology and political science. They each contend that mass rule would descend into uncoordinated chaos, citing the elites' abundance of power, influence, supposed talent and inherent "superior" psychological and sociological attributes as prime assets for governance. Michels differs from his counterparts in his belief that democratic rulership of the masses did not truly exist because only a select few could influence economic development, define social culture, and determine institutional design (DiCaprio, 2012), which he termed an oligarchy. This trio viewed elite rule as a tactical and technical necessity of mass organization (Michels, 1911/1962). In the late 1970s and early 1980s other scholars attempted to expand on these theories, still within a political and economic framework. However, DiCaprio (2012) spotlighted newer themes which explored elite influence on non-elites via institutional control (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2006), elite group dynamics (circulation and replacement) (Figueroa, 2008), cognitive models of the elite versus non-elites (Pye, 1991) and the most influential on this current work, the ideology of the elite (Kritzer, 1978). Understanding elite ideology is crucial to the WI education reform debate, as elite scholars assert that elites have tremendous influence on a country's development (DiCaprio, 2012); the sphere of education being no exception. An understanding of elite ideology can also elucidate the narrative around the persistence of colonial education institutions in the region, opening a dialogue about strategies for engaging the educated elite on educational development issues within the broader context of national development (Tarp, 2012). Given the narrow focus of the elite theory (politics and economics), this article proposes to broaden the conversation to the sphere of education.

Role of Educrats

In this study, a fresh approach will be taken to exploring WI education reform by examining the research problem through the lenses of edutocracy and elite theory, both of which are integral in understanding the thinking of the people behind the processes and systems that influence deleterious education policies and practices. The elite theoretical approach is significant because elites are crucial to explaining institutional persistence, and a key factor in institutional change will be what happens to the elite (Robinson, 2012). In this work I refer to the educated elite as educrats. Based on Denny's (2021) description of edutocracy, the scholarly literature around the elite, and my own decades' long experience in the field of education in the region, I have defined the WI educrat very specifically. They are a small purposively insular group of highly educated intellectuals from the Caribbean, who share a similarly globalized westernized worldview of self, inner circle and outer circle (Brooks, 2018), with a deep but limited view of WI educational issues owing to their narrow Western tertiary academic training. Despite their small size, they possess inordinate access to resources (Khan, 2016; Bonn, 2017) that can be converted to advantageous commodities. Though celebrated for their academic achievements, primarily owing to their research output, they mostly tend to be "faceless", "people who shape the world without anyone noticing" (The Economist, 2011, p. 1). They are not necessarily wealthy or officially titled (DiCaprio, 2012), but their access reaches politicians and funding opportunities due to networks weaved by sitting on boards and committees (Burris, 2005), acquiring memberships to elite clubs and in many cases having overt/covert political affiliations with political party heads (Abdul-Jalil, 2014). Hence, in understanding reform, we must acknowledge that the strongest force shaping politics "is not blood or money but ideas" (The Economist; 2011, p. 7), and educrats seemingly possess educated and respected ideas, which afford them the listening ear of decision makers to influence and shape education policy and practice primarily for their benefit and that of their inner circle (DiCaprio, 2012).

Research Question & Data Collection

This research was guided by the following questions:

- What has been the outcome of WI education reform policies?
- If there is little/much substantive change through WI education reform, why is this the case?

Based on these questions, I collected the documents for analysis by conducting keyword searches in scholarly databases. I was either already subscribed to these databases or could access them for free (appendix 2). Based on my research questions I searched for key terms like Caribbean education, Caribbean education reform and Caribbean education vision/mission. I searched for visions/missions to understand if they were being realized through implemented reforms. I felt such realizations would be concrete determinants as to whether objectives were attained, speaking directly to the issue of reform success. Based on my theoretical assumption that education in this region is a continuation of colonial traditions of elitism, I also searched for elite education and colonial education, which led to exploring the construct of edutocracy. I found official public documents and reports, media articles, academic publications, conference presentations, web blogs and education experts' video interviews which gave a fuller picture of the reform process. The results were unwieldly (appendix 2), so I engaged in purposive sampling aligned with the research questions (Flick, 2018) and related to the *Anglophone* CARICOM territories, the region in which I serve as a teacher-educator and researcher. I felt this region would be a good starting point from which I could then branch out for comparative work. On my second search, I delimited a Google Scholar search to 2010-2022 as most of these current works refer to earlier studies. In the other databases, I went further back to the 1980s to ensure that I was not missing out on key texts which were not captured by the google search. I made sure to sample documents which spoke to education just prior to independence when mass education was being introduced and so too reform around the 1940s and 1950s. I also examined samples from the independence era (many of these territories became independent during the 1960s and 1970s), and post-independence (1980s-present). I searched for documents related specifically to reform policies and papers and implemented initiatives throughout the Anglophone CARICOM region and some other comparable former British colonies (e.g., Africa), for a wider scope of understanding. I searched across fields of education, sociology, economics, psychology, and Caribbean history for a more cross-disciplinary and wholistic understanding of the issues. I capped the sample when I began to see redundancy, whereby, no new insights were emerging from the data (Morgan, 2022). In deciding what to include in the final sample, I followed Flick's (2018) directive of ensuring authenticity, by determining that several different versions did not exist and that they were primary sources (Morgan, 2022). I chose credible documents which were mostly free from errors and sourced from reputable scholarly databases (appendix 2). I also tended towards organization websites (.org or .edu) rather than commercial websites (.com) for statistical credibility. Additionally, I cross-referenced statistical data in research documents with data on the organization's websites for the same period and topic if available. Approximately 80 documents remained after the delimitation process.

Data Analysis

I first coded the data manually to compile relevant themes and then used MaxQDA, a qualitative data analysis software for further coding and analysis of the data. This software proved useful in justifying/rejecting already existing code choices, in highlighting other pertinent themes and organizing and systematizing the data for easier analysis. I coded, and categorized codes into major and minor themes (appendix 3) until I saw a recurrence of some major themes (conflict/contradiction; elitism; edutocracy, vision/mission, community) which gave rise to the title of this work. I then attempted to connect the themes, at which point things changed. I started by using thematic analysis strategy, whereby themes, patterns and categorizations inductively emerged, because in the past I saw and handled "documents as content" (Miller & Alvarado, 2005). However, I began to see that this content was not merely descriptive, as primarily associated with thematic analysis. It was merging into a narrative of conflict between colonial ideologies and contemporary education visions, and between educational theory and pedagogical practice, so my view of documents morphed into commentary, an inference of the social reality suggested in the documents (Coffey, 2014). I therefore recoded the data showing this shift from description to exposition and was able to uncover “unexpected meanings rather than summarize the data” (Morgan, 2022, p. 73). I interpreted the research inductively to construct *my* meaning around WI education reform, which meant that I analyzed the sample by examining how *my* views and assumptions influenced my findings, giving more transparency to my thought processes and my interpretations. This is what Morgan (2022) calls the reflexive approach, completely based on qualitative methods. Grounded in the overriding emergent theme of conflict therefore, I teased out several specific educational conflicts from the sample documents by comparing and contrasting the colonial ideology of education with the written present-day Caribbean education vision as cited in Jules & Williams, (2015) (fig. 2). These comparisons and contrasts told a narrative of failing WI education reform. The final constructed meanings, informed by the data analysis, were therefore based on multiple and varied documents, my own professional observations and experience in education for over 25 years, the exploration of the edutocracy and elite theoretical perspectives (Miller & Alvarado, 2005) and the explanations of behaviors and practices (Bouchrika, 2021) (see appendix 4 for my thought process).

Limitations

There were limitations to QDA. Some documents did not contain the information I sought, especially in response to newly emerging questions. Other documents were limited in the information provided; for example, the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) website showed the percentage failures, but not percentages of the lowest passing grades which would give a better scope of students’ overall exam struggles. In hindsight, interviews might have helped in acquiring this information. Finally, it was possible that the public documents were not always objective; nevertheless, where possible, I relied on the statistics being correct, so that I could interpret the overall data in the context of these statistics and my own professional knowledge and experience of the system.

Findings and Discussion

This research explored the outcomes of decades-long WI education reform through the lens of edutocracy and elite theory and the reasons for such outcomes to establish the level of reform success. Using QDA, the major theme of *conflict* emerged from the data, which was subdivided into conflicts of education theory/vision versus education practice. From the data analysis emerged a narrative of a Caribbean education vision grounded in democracy, equity, and community; however, this vision gave way to a reality of the practice of elitism, inequity and singularity, a focus on self-achievement rather than community building (Brooks, 2018). The data reflected an idealised theory of Caribbean education through the espousal of democratic education expressed as universal access; equity reflected as the development of plural literacies, and community expressed as collective Caribbean identity. Simultaneously, it reflected a contradictory practice of an elite education evidenced by linguistic inaccessibility. Additionally, inequity was bound up in an academic literacy bias promoted by schooling, while the concept of singularity, through academic individualism and self-achievement was principally encouraged, resulting in western cultural orientation (fig. 2). In this section I describe and explain these patterns of conflict through the lens of edutocracy and elite theory, while offering alternative voices on the issues. I then propose the way forward through newly emerging research questions.

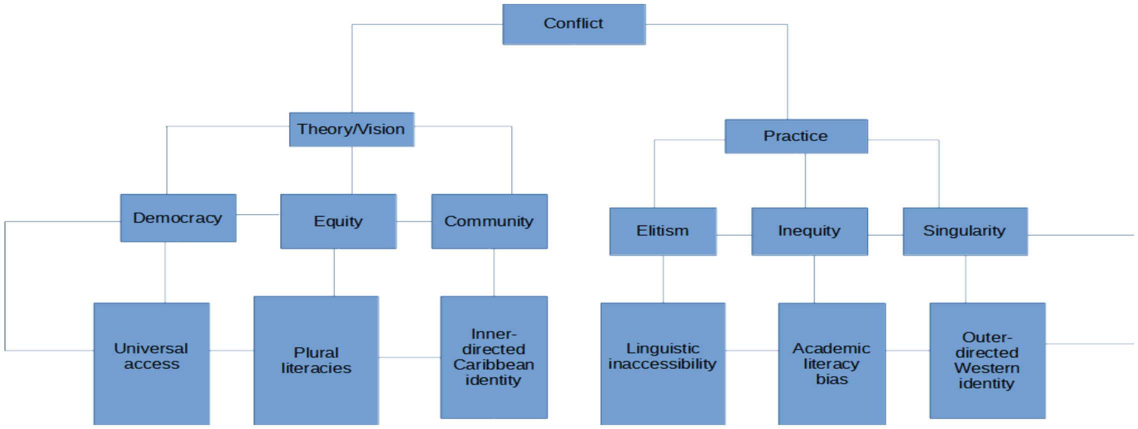
Conflict
Theory/Vision
Practice
Democracy
Equity
Community
Elitism
Inequity
Singularity
Universal access
Plural literacies
Inner-directed Caribbean identity
Linguistic inaccessibility
Academic literacy bias
Outer-directed Western identity

Figure 2: *Conflicts in WI education*

Caribbean Democratic Vision vs. Elitist Practice

Universal Access vs Linguistic Exclusion

A story of conflict between a Caribbean vision of democratic education and a practice of elitism emerged. While democratic education is bandied about by WI governments, it is not explicitly defined. Based on documents used for this research, it is associated with governability, equality, collaboration, participation (Feu et al. 2017). It is portrayed as a practice of social justice, based on human rights, learning environments where teachers and students work together to develop shared meanings (Brissett, 2018), education for increased political participation, increased access and improved livelihoods (Jules & Williams, 2015); essentially, education for equity, access, participation and equality (Tejeda et al., 2003). The first major contradiction observed was that of the democratic vision of universal access and the elitist practice of linguistic exclusion (table 1).

Table 1: *Universal Access vs Linguistic Inaccessibility*

Caribbean Vision	WI Practice
Universal access: "Education for all" (EFA). All Caribbean students regardless of socio-economic status will have access to free primary and secondary education	**Linguistic inaccessibility**: Most vernacular speakers have little/no access to the school's language, English, or its curriculum due to lack of proficiency

As part of the democratic agenda, regional governments worked diligently towards universal entry at the primary and secondary levels (Pilgrim et al., 2018) to the detriment of language access. However, through the elite theory lens, I perceive a struggle between physical and linguistic access. This lens highlights economically privileged children with access, opportunities and resources affording them quality interaction with the school's language outside of school, enabling increased linguistic proficiency and providing them a better chance of understanding the curriculum content. Conversely, through the edutocracy lens, specifically, plantation pedagogy, linguistic access becomes a pedagogy of oppression for the majority monolingual dialectal speakers with little opportunity outside of school to engage with English, but this is the language "enthroned in the school and in the classroom…at the expense of the vernacular used in the home" (London, 2002, p. 105). Meanwhile, linguistic bridges are not created, like using the child's vernacular in a systematic and deliberate way to facilitate language acquisition (Siegel, 2007; Migge et al., 2010). The result of this pedagogy of oppression is high failure rates in regional exams and consistent commentary in regional reports of students' poor language expression (cxc.org). Still the problem is never interpreted as one of linguistic inaccessibility, but of other kinds, such as teacher quality (Campbell, 2018), examination structures (Hamilton, 2012) and poor reading habits, which are then targeted through teacher training, examination overhauls and remedial reading programs (list of initiatives in Jules & Williams, 2015).

Through the inner plantation lens, linguistic democratization, that is, use of the vernacular to aid second language acquisition, becomes further problematized. It becomes an issue of the WI perception of self, through the vernacular, as lesser, owing to a linguistic ideological indoctrination about the vernacular, in the WI voice, as a bastardization of English, a non-language, lazy speech (Nero, 2006) to be rejected as a pedagogical tool, and beneath the dignity of the formal teaching and learning space (Denny, 2002). Disallowing the systematic use of students' language as a learning resource works against a collaborative effort of shared meaning between teacher and student (Brissett, 2018), the foundation of democratic education. It also negates the espousal of student retention within the universal access plan, as students' incompetency in English leads to school withdrawal through truancy (Jules & Williams, 2015; Bourne & McLymont, 2020; Government of Grenada, 2006) and other means. European monolingual education practice in a predominantly WI bi/multidialectal space has been and continues to be colonial elitism. Under such undemocratic linguistic restrictions, devoiced underachieving students are unlikely to care to access or inhabit this hopeless space, even free of cost. At this stage, the inner plantation ideology rhetoric of deservedness is weaved into the narrative.

Through the inner plantation theory viewfinder, a clear shot of deficiency comes into focus. Denny (2021) poignantly argues that unlike any other creole institution, "education has infected the Afro-WI with a deficiency syndrome. They have inherited a discourse of denigration, humiliation, deficiency, subjugation, and disenfranchisement from the education system" (p. 7). The result, she claims, is a lack of self-esteem, low motivation and anxieties which block language and learning inputs and perpetuate a psychological downward spiral associated with the feeling of undeservedness as part of this pedagogy of oppression. Undoubtedly, students are deficient in the school language. This fact is less worrisome than the inflexible, denigrating language attitudes of educrats, who refuse to be educated about flawed creole linguistic ideologies and prohibit creative means to help students acquire the target language which would give them "access to the code for unlocking the curricula's content on which they are assessed" (Denny, 2021, p. 8). Educrats' refusal to expand linguistic access and tolerance through the incorporation of multidialectalism in schools, therefore, more so than students' language incompetency, becomes the true educational barrier to student success.

The outcome of WI education reform has been laudable universal access, but there are other insidious outcomes like perennial student withdrawals and continually high percentages of inadequate target language (TL) proficiency (cxc.org). The views through edutocracy and elite theory suggest that the continued gap between the democratic education vision and the elitist teaching practice of Anglophone monolingualism in a bi/multidialectal context is a substantive reason why WI education reform has not yet met its primary objective of true universal access.

Equitable Vision vs Inequitable Practice

Plural Literacy Vision vs. Mono-Literacy Practice

The disparity between an equitable vision of plural literacy development and the inequitable practice of the overemphasis of academic mono-literacy emerges as another major theme (Table 2).

Table 2: *Plural Literacy Vision vs. Mono-Literacy Practice*

Caribbean Vision	WI Practice
Plural literacies and competencies: A vision of an education system based on the teaching, assessment and certification of plural literacies and competencies	**Mono-literacy:** An emphasis on developing academic literacy by way of teaching, learning, assessment, and certification

According to the National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS), equity refers to fairness. In education, equity means that every student gets the kinds of opportunities and resources required depending on their specific learning situations and needs (NSHSS, 2021). This is different from equality, which is synonymous with sameness, so that every student gets the same resources and opportunities, like school funding, quality and abundant materials and facilities, and quality instruction (NSHSS, 2021). Equity and equality in the WI context, would look like that espoused in 1997 when the CARICOM Council of Human and Social Development approved the regional Vision of the Ideal Caribbean Person strategy. CARICOM heads proposed that through Caribbean education, the ideal Caribbean person should demonstrate multiple literacies, independent and critical thinking, question beliefs and practices of past and present and bring this all to bear on problem solving (Jules & Williams, 2015). This vision is at odds with the reality of an entrenched bias towards academic literacy (Layne, 1999; Coates, 2012; Brissett, 2021), while educators and assessment bodies continue to complain that students do not think critically (Jules, 2010). For example, Brissett (2021) speaks to the teach-to-test approach employed in Barbados which limits development of analytical and critical thinking skills (p. 20). Tsang et al (2002) contend that four CARICOM territories under their review "need to promote the acquisition of problem-solving and critical thinking skills" (p. 29). Correspondingly, Watson & Watson (2014) lament that the system is content, and discipline focused, emphasizing letter grades to compare students rather than identifying their individual capabilities. WI students therefore need to develop other kinds of literacies besides those promulgated in schools through an academized curriculum.

The over-emphasis of academic pedagogy aligns squarely with ideologies of elitism. In the Caribbean, inequity persists because inequality persists due to elite persistence, and elite education perpetuates inequality (Khan, 2016). For instance, WI educrats, in practice, support the view that the intellectual is best qualified to lead, and by extension, academic grades are the best indicator of intellectualism, so it is unsurprising that an academic school system is organized to facilitate an academic elite selection process. Simultaneously, educrats argue that WI education is a meritocratic system which gives all a fair chance of selection because school success is an indicator of personal deservedness, rewarding individual ability and efforts, not wealth or privilege (Wiederkehr et al., 2015). Educrats cleverly contend that if the playing field is levelled through educational access, but students are still failing despite having the same content, instruction, and assessment, then the problem rests with the students' inabilities. The argument seems plausible until one unpacks its complexity through a sharper focus of the plantation pedagogy lens, which illuminates a conflict of a foreign Europeanized, mono-cultural, mono-linguistic, one-size-fits all education system (Jules, 2015; Tsang et al., 2002) within a multicultural, non-White, bi/multidialectal space. Furthermore, an elongated view through the elite theory illuminates the blind spots which expose powerful external forces impacting learning outside of school walls. These include academically high performing schools with better resources due to their wealthier demographic, which privilege students to richer and more diverse learning environments and experiences that expand their linguistic and intellectual repertoire. Additionally, having more access to financial resources means these students receive extra tutoring from the best certified teachers in the field to prepare them for national and regional exams. Yet, the ability of the elite to have the masses "buy in" to the concept that education is the way out of poverty and that everyone receives a fair education means that as a society "[o]ur continued delusion that we live in a meritocracy masks any dissenting view" (Cosslett, 2019, para 5). Meritocracy is just another elite ideology to assuage the fears of the majority, so they feel less oppressed by an educational system packaged as freedom from their woeful economic circumstances. Document analysis viewed through elite theory shows that meritocratic espousal is a tool used by educrats for maintaining the status quo at a time when colonial ideology of control, through education, has shifted from undignified complete subjugation to a more palatable elite co-optation (Viegi, 2016). Education reform in the hands of educrats will not consider that equity (fairness) cannot allow for sameness of language, curricular content, teaching methodology and assessment in effectively addressing issues of culturally and socially diverse learners with varying competencies and intelligences, varying access to school language and learning opportunities. A focus on *sameness* (equality) in WI education reform, has yet to result in a *fair* (equitable) outcome for the disadvantaged masses.

The narrative of meritocracy illustrates that two things can be true at once. Educrats can advance meritocracy, equality and social responsibility while simultaneously supporting privilege, disenfranchisement, and self-interest. To illustrate, educrats who head publicly funded educational institutions can justify educating their children in private institutions, believing that the institutions they themselves manage are too poorly equipped to offer their children educational advantages. Educrats are therefore unmotivated to improve the poorly functioning public education system because they are privileged to withdraw from it at will. Still, grass-roots communities (the most adversely affected) will not easily oust educrats, so it behooves these communities to find where educrats' self-interests align with national interests (DiCaprio, 2012), and engage them for the majority benefit (Tarp, 2012).

Document analysis of the issue of educational equity creates a narrative around an outcome of blurred idealistic Caribbean visions regarding plural literacies. It reads as a tragedy of reforms which reinforce an ideology of schooling as academic literacy, a mere vestige of racial, and I might add, classist discrimination, which reiterate questions around the role of education for the non-academically inclined/interested majority (Tejeda et al., 2003). It is reasonable to conclude, based on a reading of the documents through the edutocracy and elite theories, that if these instituted education reforms *principally* advocate for plural literacies, but the system consistently and contrastively over-emphasis academic literacy practices, then the reforms fail to meet their objectives and must be deemed unsuccessful.

Vision of Caribbean Community vs Practice of Education for Singularity

Inner-Directed Caribbean Identity vs Outer-Directed Westernized Identity

Reform documents speak to a developmental mission to grow Caribbean community through an education to create the ideal Caribbean person, but the reality could not be more divergent. WI schools inculcate singularity and self-achievement through “murderous academic competition” (Layne, 1999), resulting in an education which orient students towards western capitalist values (Bewaji, 2008; Brissett, 2018). A cohesive reading of the data conveys that WI reform initiatives fail to meet the objective of creating the ideal Caribbean person because they have been reduced to obscure written rhetoric, tucked away in official reports, educational plans, strategies, white papers, green papers, and policies (Jules & Williams, 2015). The aforementioned 1997 CARICOM regional educational development strategy entitled “Vision of the Ideal Caribbean Person” is such an example. Three years on (2000), rather than speaking to outcomes, the Inter-American Development Bank report reiterates Caribbean governments’ *hopes* of implementing this strategy through an education training system to promote social cohesion, historical and cultural heritage, strong sense of [Caribbean identity] and self-esteem (Tsang et al., 2002, p. 44). Twenty-two years later (2022), the reality is that the vision of this ideal Caribbean person has been blurred by schooling that creates Westernized, outward looking citizens (Bewaji, 2008; Hackett, 2004), focused on migrating to the Western metropoles for economic ‘salvation’ (table 3).

Table 3: *“Caribbeanization” vs. Westernization*

Caribbean Vision	**WI Practice**
Culturally Inner-directed: Vision of education which provides a strong basis for understanding and celebrating Caribbean cultural identity as part of a Caribbean community	**Culturally outer-directed**: Education which orients students towards western education, western employment, culture, goods and services considered superior in comparison to African/Caribbean counterparts

Though the link between education and the labor market is important in the Caribbean (Beckles & Richards-Kennedy, 2021; Brissett, 2021) and global context, it supports a fundamentally flawed view of WI education as merely preparation for the job market. Learning therefore becomes decentred, replaced by chasing credentials (Lakes & Carter, 2011) to acquire employment. Such views work at cross-purposes with the notion of a Caribbean education that promotes and celebrates plural literacies, beyond economic gains (Tsang et al., 2002), an education that foregrounds socio-psychological well-being rooted in cultural identity to encourage self-worth and self-esteem. If the annual regional education reports are to be instructive, then Caribbean examination results erode students’ self-esteem. According to the IADB (2017), in 2015, 48% in the region failed Math, 39% English and 26% the sciences. Notably, these figures do not capture those who obtained the lowest passing grade, which has deeper implications. In concrete individual terms, only 6.1% of Barbadian students managed to get 4 passes in a single sitting; typically, students sit for 7 or 8 subjects. These results meant that 67% of school leavers in 2015 were unqualified for work in various sectors and for tertiary level education level (IADB, 2017). This is *not* a confidence booster for these examinees. Such figures outline a vision of empty rhetoric. In reality, some twenty years later, the idealized vision of the Caribbean person, *through education*, appears more akin to examination failure and lack of self-esteem.

Through the microscope of edutocracy, a picture emerges of WI schooling to create a "westernized global citizen", quite contrary to the vision of the ideal Caribbean person. The modern picture of the education system resembles a clone of colonialism whereby the strategy for addressing current educational problems is (1) looking at how a similar problem has been addressed in the mother country, or those of its Western counterparts, (2) adopting that solution and (3) adapting it for local circumstances (Miller, 1984) without implicatory analysis of the objectivity of Western knowledge (Bewaji, 2008; McQuaid, 2009). In fairness, WI governments walk a tight rope as they attempt to balance education visions alongside targets set by global western agencies funding their reforms (Jules, 2015; Miller, 2014; Tsang et al., 2002), but "the continued dependence on donor aid has created a development dependency upon donors to fund projects" (Jules & Williams, 2015, p. 288). This means that there is a vicious cycle in which WI governments typically depend on culturally divergent western ideas and financing to combat Caribbean education issues. They justify tapping into the West's riches as a means of preparing globalized citizens, while paradoxically heralding a need for an education to create authentic Caribbean citizens. A paradox of aiming for globalization without ever mastering the previous stage of regionalization, which ironically will better position the Caribbean for survival in the globalization process (Jules, 2010), surfaces through the lens of dependency. WI education, through this lens, reads as a system working against its own vision by circumventing, and hence invalidating issues of Caribbean identity as part of the globalization narrative.

There is a more insidious dependency than the economic, (Best, 1968; Levitt, 2005), though still related. The economic theory of dependency constructs an account of the producer providing raw materials for the manufacturer who resells to the producer, now as consumer. The producer is entrapped between getting the raw material sold for revenue, but also satisfying a need to acquire the finished product (Bristol, 2010). The processes of WI education can be similarly understood. The raw material is analogous to WI students' unfiltered, pure, creative talents on first entering school. Throughout schooling they become manufactured, 'refined', changed by the westernized educative system that distorts and confuses their thinking about things indigenous, which the scholarly discourse describes as anti-traditionalism, intellectual hegemony, and education of whiteness (Viegi, 2016; Bewaji, 2008; Shahjahan & Edwards, 2021). The consequence, I argue, is that through westernized education WI students buy back into the buy-in of Western superiority of ideas, cultures, and services. For the academically proficient, the result is regional brain drain (Jules, 2015; Williams, 2012; George, 2016) as academics pursue Western tertiary education, and lured by its lucrative job prospects, opt to reside outside the region. For those who cannot enter the western space through academic prowess, they may devise a plan, legally or otherwise, to migrate for a more economically secure future. In this way, WI education teaches students to become dependent on the West as an economic savior.

When the inner plantation and plantation pedagogy lenses are applied to this identity issue within the education context, the picture becomes more unsettling. There are scenes depicting a poor sense of the African indigenous self, a disdain for things African (Bewaji, 2008; Thiong'o, 1981) and a view that everything local is inferior to the colonizer's way of life (Viegi, 2016). This amounts to a pedagogy of oppression and hopelessness, an "educational practice [that] is essentially a 'black' practice of whiteness… implemented within the local educational arena" (Bristol, 2012, p. 72). In essence, this is the replica of a colonial education which aimed to establish a worldview and a view of self and community *for* people of African descent through a subversive curriculum based on the "objectivity" of European knowledge (London, 2002). I imagine that this is perhaps what Thiong'o (1981) referred to as "psychological violence of the classroom" (p. 9), perpetrated by European values and visions in the curriculum. When I gaze through the inner plantation lens, I also see a picture of psychological *self-inflicted violence*, an outright cultural identity battle, which did not begin until the point at which the African body and mind intersected with the ideologies of the creolized school. The result is a confusion of ideology; for example, the use of the home versus school language in the school setting becomes an internal badge which labels students as either articulate speakers or dunces, as those speaking properly versus those speaking badly. Labels previously unused as part of the home community narrative, but which now psychologically confuse, degrade, and scar many initially curious, active, precocious children who within the school context become silent, disinterested, compliant and sometimes passively aggressive. Reforms do not earnestly address this issue of cultural (mis)identity, which is necessary in breaking the cycle of negative self-fulfilling prophecy inherited by many slave descendants in this region.

The proposed outcome of Caribbean education reform aimed at creating a Caribbean identity has not adequately met its objective. Instead, the narrative shows that rather than creating the ideal Caribbean person, WI education constructs an ideologically confused and culturally conflicted people (Hackett, 2004). One group scoffs at "their traditional heritage as a consequence of their ignorance of this heritage and the intellectual and cultural captivity engendered by the insidious indoctrinative brainwashing occasioned by the new educational exposure", while the other becomes "an ingratiating Africana intelligentsia, who are forever grateful to the Western (mis)educationists and…are now dedicated to the task of forever deriding and disrespecting their own cultural heritage" (Bewaji, 2008, pp. 12-13). The marginalized group however is more adversely affected. They are unable to finance alternatives to this compulsory education which offers little non-academic content to acquire meaningful skills for employment or entrepreneurship to increase their chances of upward social mobility (Soling, 2017). Additionally, the socio-psychological consequence of interacting with this creolized system disadvantages both groups. By promoting a westernized education of self-achievement and individualization, *all* are cheated of an opportunity to learn about their "civic consciousness, a sense that we live life embedded in community and nation and that the essence of the admirable life is community before self" (Brooks, 2018, para. 14), aligning with true integrationist and globalist education visions and practices as outlined by the Caribbean vision.

Conclusion

It is not within the scope of this research to provide solutions, but rather to outline the outcomes of Caribbean education reform from its inception in the 1950s to present, and through the lenses of edutocracy and elite theory, to provide possible reasons for these outcomes. I do not claim to provide an exhaustive list of outcomes or rationales, but I do contend that utilizing the edutocracy and elite theories provides a clearer understanding of the debate, which depicts conceptualizations of Caribbean visions and colonial practices on a collision course in the education reform drama (fig. 3). To answer research question one, the outcomes of education reform are as follows: 1. Document analyses reveal that Caribbean governments espouse an education that targets all Caribbean people (mass education), essentially, an investment in the human potential of Caribbean people, but they practice financing higher education through scholarships *only* for the academically gifted (*selective education*). This can be read as a capital investment in the schooling of the scholarly (fig. 3), which begs the question as to the role of education for the non-academic. 2. Reformists also promote a vision of increased access to education, but students are denied access to the school's curriculum because they lack proficiency in the school's language, and until now, there has been no real effort to create programs which use the vernacular as a bridge over to English, so *students fail to acquire English proficiently and they fail to grasp the curriculum delivered through that language*. 3. Reform documents speak to a vision of an education of equity and equality, such as growing students' potential through the development of multiple competencies/literacies; yet *there is an over-emphasis on academic literacy* in the teaching, learning, assessment, and certification of content. 4. There has been reform aimed at "Caribbeanization," but instead *students have become oriented to western values*.

To answer research question two, *there has been little substantive change created by WI education reform initiatives* over the decades. Firstly, this is because the reform objectives embodied in education vision and mission statements are disengaged from the practices they hope to affect. Secondly, reform strategies address the concrete systems and processes of education while overlooking the abstract ideologies of the people behind them which may be an inhibitive force to successful implementation. Thirdly, reforms do not directly address the conflict between the visions of democracy, equity and community that they espouse, and the educational realities of elitism, inequity and indoctrination of singularity. Fourthly, reforms appear as vague meaningless rhetoric which cannot be easily concretized or implemented. Finally, reform measures attempt to address the inequitable educational outcomes with little consideration for the inequitable forces (exogenous and endogenous) that create them, such as the guise of equity and equality through an elite manipulation of meritocracy. In short, the colonial ideologies currently embedded in education, conflict with the Caribbean vision which is struggling to emerge beyond the WI practices, processes and people in the education sector as detailed in figure 3. The questions for future research therefore become: How can these current findings directly address the gaps in WI education reform, and what strategies can be used to engage the educrat in a meaningful education reform process?

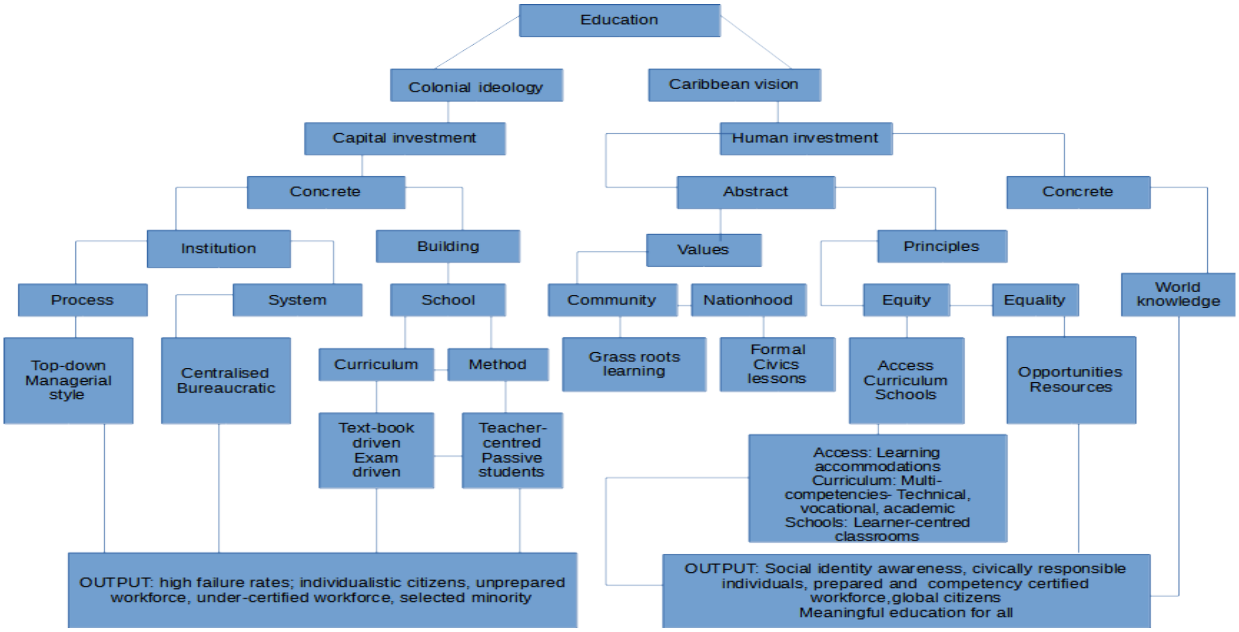
Education
Colonial ideology
Caribbean vision
Capital investment
Human investment
Concrete
Abstract
Concrete
Institution
Building
Values
Principles
Process
System
School
Community
Nationhood
Equity
Equality
World knowledge
Top-down Managerial style
Centralised Bureaucratic
Curriculum
Method
Grass roots learning
Formal Civics lessons
Access Curriculum Schools
Opportunities Resources
Text-book driven Exam driven
Teacher-centred Passive students
Access: Learning accommodations Curriculum: Multi-competencies- Technical, vocational, academic Schools: Learner-centred classrooms
OUTPUT: high failure rates; individualistic citizens, unprepared workforce, under-certified workforce, selected minority
OUTPUT: Social identity awareness, civically responsible individuals, prepared and competency certified workforce,global citizens Meaningful education for all

Figure 3: *Colonial and Caribbean Conceptualizations of Education*

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Dr. Stacy Denny is an applied linguist and the Head of the Centre for English Language Learning at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, in Barbados. She is a former awardee of the prestigious Cambridge Commonwealth Scholarship. Her research interests include Vernacular Education, Equity and equality in education and Language Teacher Training Methodologies for Black Education.

Appendix A: *CARICOM Nations*

Member States	*Associated Members
Antigua and Barbuda; Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago	Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands

*Not yet independent from Britain; hence, cannot access full member status

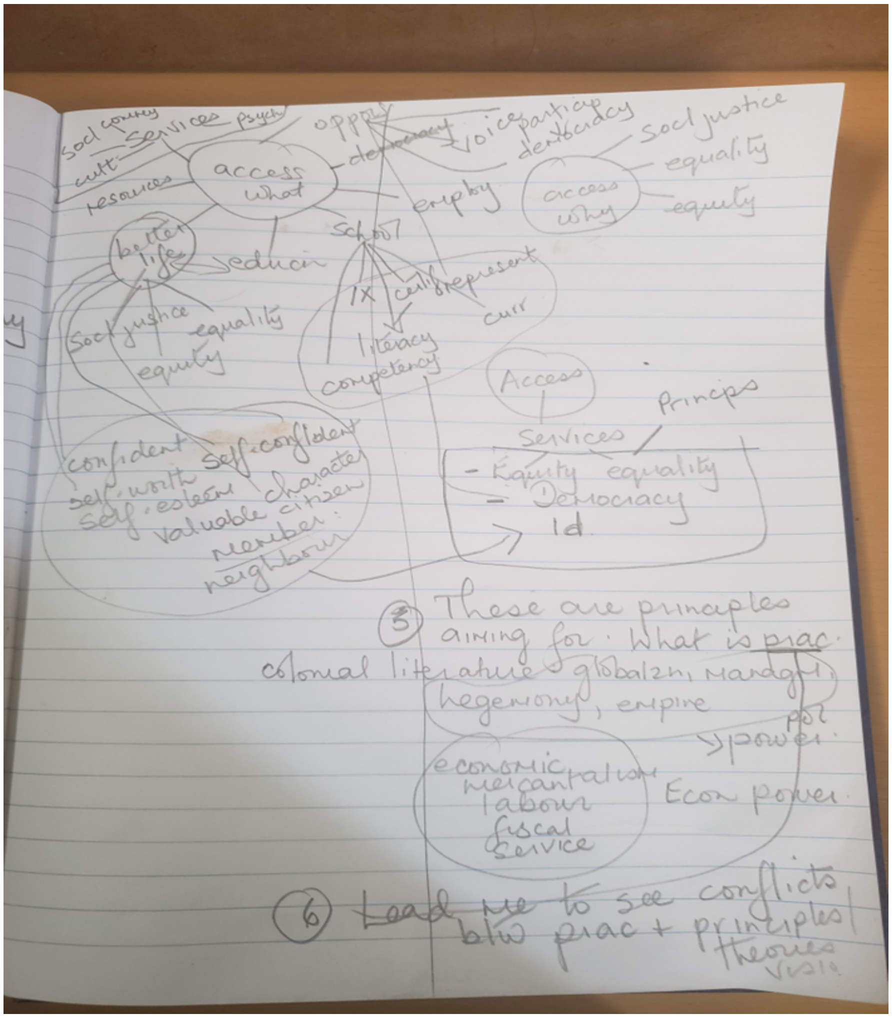
Appendix B: *Databases and Research Results*

KEY WORDS	Scopus	WOS	ERIC	SD	DOAJ	JSTOR	GS 2010-2022	RG	WC
Elite education	16, 745	52, 361	1819	37,829	61	32,354	1,740, 000	NG*	64, 364
Caribbean education	6458	51, 949	916	22, 771	30	107, 830	610, 000	NG	46, 390
C'bb education reform	6852	57,974	61	3800	9	36,534	76,300	NG	3624
C'bb education vision/mission	7730	53, 406	11	3539	8	37,825	94, 400	NG	2647
Colonial education	6647	53,136	2048	23,912	670	363,126	915,000	NG	80, 350
edutocracy	0	1	2	0	2	0	4	2	7

*NG= search results not given, but several publications appear

WOS: Web of Science
ERIC: Education Resources Information Center
SD: Science Direct
DOAJ: Directory of Open Access Journals
JSTOR: Journal Storage
GS: Google Scholar
RG: ResearchGate: under each category
WC: WorldCat

Appendix C: *Portion of my Thematic Scribbles*


socl country
services
psych
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employ
better
life
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competency
Soc justice
equality
equity
Access
Princips
Services
- Equity equality
- ① Democracy
Id.
confident
self-confident
self-worth
self-esteem
character
valuable citizen
member
neighbour
colonial literature
globalzn, Manag
hegemony, empire
pol
power
economic
mercantalism
labour
fiscal
service
Econ power

③ These are principles aiming for. What is prac.

⑥ ~~Lead me~~ to see conflicts b/w prac + principles/theories
vision

Appendix D: *Notes of my Thought Process to Explain Thematic Scribbles*

1. I start by asking reform WHAT? Looked at the time-period pre-independence to independence, so reform elite education to mass education. This was about access.
2. Why reform: most documents indicated to create a Caribbean person, move away from colonialism. Was elite education achieving this: No. People moving up social ladder and forgetting those at bottom. What was elite education creating: anti-traditionists (tension between indigenous and modernization); individualism (self-achievement vs community belonging), classism: the academic vs the vocational. Tensions/conflicts building
3. What was colonial/Caribbean vision for education based on documents: Colonial= words like selection, sorting, classifying, control. Caribbean: community, identity, life-long learning, skills, competencies. Showing that visions were different. Yet same outcomes: poor-quality education, inequity, inequality; poor exam results, lack of retention, poor certification rates etc. I look back at the reason for reform=ACCESS. Construct thematic tree (seen in photo). Looked at access to what, and its expected results: words like education, schooling, resources, services, opportunities, competency, certification, better-life, equality, equity, confidence, self-worth, good neighbours, good citizens; sense of belonging featured as sub-themes from readings, and my own thinking. Look at what connected some of these sub-themes. I see 3 major themes like equity/social justice; democracy; sense of community. These are principles the Caribbean vision aims for, so what are the educational practices? Notice from my readings, classroom observations and recollecting my own experiences, that practices (over-emphasis on curriculum, texts, assessment, rote learning etc.) are very colonial/traditional in nature. Immediately can see issue of conflict between contemporary educational principles/visions and colonial/traditional practice as the overarching theme.

Natality, the Past, and the Pearl Diver: Exploring Hannah Arendt's Educational Teaching.

Frank Giuseffi, William Woods University

Abstract

The penetrating philosophical and political writings of Hannah Arendt has offered humankind provocative and insightful analysis on political action, moral behavior, and human freedom. All the more arresting, are Arendt's writings on education, fully expressed in her work, "Crisis in Education." This article investigates Arendt's understanding of the crisis and how natality, authority, and conserving what Arendt terms the "newcomer's" revolutionary action through a nuanced view of the past, addresses that crisis. This article also considers a more comprehensive understanding of the newcomer's revolutionary activity during educational experiences by analyzing Arendt's views on tradition and the "pearl diver" metaphor described in her essay on Walter Benjamin. In exploring the impact Arendt's thinking may have on education, educationists can have new hope in their quest for further theoretical and philosophical underpinnings for teaching and learning and enhance the vibrancy and meaningfulness of philosophy of education.

Keywords: *natality, pearl diver, newcomer, authority, tradition, fragmented historiography*

Although not strictly considered a philosopher of education, Hannah Arendt's exhaustive work on political life and keen observations on the American democratic experience gave rise to a unique understanding of education elucidated in her chapter essay, "The Crisis in Education" (hereafter *CE*) published in *Between Past and Future* (1961). While the main crisis is the dubious influence authority has in the modern world and specifically in education, Arendt offers readers several other ruminations about education worth noting. In this article, I first offer a brief description of Hannah Arendt's life and work. Second, I present the major themes of Arendt's teaching on education, those being natality, the teacher's authority, and preserving, what Arendt calls the "newcomer's" revolutionary or creative activity through the past. I then offer a fuller understanding of Arendt's ideas about the creative aspects of students' learning by drawing from her views on tradition and her unique use of the "pearl diver" metaphor. In investigating these central ideas, an appreciation and understanding can be achieved of Arendt's thinking on education, to include the challenges and opportunities these ideas pose for education today.

The Life and Work of Hannah Arendt

Hannah Arendt was born in 1906 in Hanover, Germany. Arendt studied classics, theology, and philosophy at the University of Berlin and attended graduate school at the University of Marburg under the noted philosopher, Martin Heidegger. As a doctoral student in Heidelberg, Arendt completed her dissertation on St. Augustine's idea of love under the existentialist philosopher, Karl Jaspers.[1] Arendt's initial interest and ultimate life's work on the political, however, did not emerge until the rise of Hitler[2] and then fully realized with the burning of the Reichstaag in 1933.[3] With these tragic events, Arendt, along with many other German Jewish intellectuals at the time, emigrated to the United States.[4] As an observer and participant in human affairs, Arendt worked in many diverse roles: newspaper writer, research manager, and senior editor. Arendt eventually took a position as a professor at the New School for Social Research until her death in 1975.[5] Arendt's various intellectual pursuits resulted in several acclaimed books such as *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), *Men in Dark Times* (1955), *The Human Condition* (1958), *Between Past and Future* (1961), *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), and *The Life of the Mind* (1978) published posthumously.[6]

Philosophical Influences

Arendt is considered one of the most impactful political theorists of the twentieth century.[7] Arendt's political theories were rooted in pre-Greek philosophy, the ideas of Plato and Aristotle, and Roman History. Arendt came to believe the thoughts of Plato and Aristotle were ultimately detrimental to what she termed the *vita activa*—the active life based on labor, work, and action.[8] Political life was not a contemplative or philosophical activity as Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies suggested. Instead, pre-Greek philosophy reflected in the figures of Homer, Sophocles, and Thucydides, showed a truer picture of the human person, manifested in freedom and the experience "of not being bound to or by anything, of initiating utterly new things for which no patterns exist."[9] When exploring the American Founding, Arendt concluded that the founders looked to the Greek polis and the Roman *res publica* for guidance.[10]

Arendt was also influenced by her former teacher, Martin Heidegger. It cannot be overstated the admiration Arendt had for Heidegger. In her writings about the gifted teacher, Arendt observes: "Thinking has come to life again; the cultural treasures of the past, believed to be dead, are being made to speak, in the course of which it turns out that they propose things altogether different from the familiar, worn-out trivialities they had been presumed to say. There exists a teacher; one can perhaps learn to think."[11] This curious wording offers an early glimpse of Arendt's later perspective of recognizing past events as treasures that speak to the issues of the present.

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[1] Dana R. Villa. "Chronology," ed. Dana R. Villa (Cambridge: The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt, 2000), xiii.

[2] Maurizio Passerin d'Entreves,"Hannah Arendt" in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford: Stanford University, 2019), https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/arendt/

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[5] Dana R. Villa. "Chronology," ed. Dana R. Villa (Cambridge: The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt, 2000), xv-xvi.

[6] Maurizio Passerin d'Entreves,"Hannah Arendt" in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford: Stanford University, 2019), https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/arendt/

[7] Dana R. Villa." Introduction: The Development of Arendt's Political Thought," ed. Dana R. Villa (Cambridge: Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt, 2000), 1.

[8] Carrie Rogers, "Beginning and Becoming: Hannah Arendt's Theory of Action and Action Research in Education" *inquiry in education* 5, no.1 (2014): 1-10, http://digitalcommons.nl.edu/ie/vol5/iss1/2

[9] Jerome Kohn, introduction to *Between Past and Future* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2006), ix

[10] Ernst Vollrath, "Hannah Arendt Views the United States," eds. Peter Graf Kielmansegg, Horst Mewes, & Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt (Cambridge: Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss: German Emigres and American Political Thought after World War II, 1997). 52.

Arendt initially believed Heidegger's major philosophical principle of facticity (Faktizitat), or "being-in-the-world" *(Dasein),* and explorations on the activity of thinking, cleared a path for a new philosophy that finally responded to the existential experiences of human beings.[12] Heidegger's exploration of *Dasein* emerged out of his continual quest to determine what was meant by *Being*. According to Heidegger, the ancient Greeks' awe and wonder about Being was obscured by the historical development of Western philosophy.[13] Heidegger believed Western philosophy formulated ontological notions of Being as at first, a universal concept; second, something indescribable; and third, as self-evident.[14] Considered to be incorrect ways of defining Being, Heidegger posits that the quest for what we mean by Being must be phenomenological, to wit, reality is disclosed without the assistance of any theory, frame of reference, or elucidation.[15] This phenomenological approach begins with a thing overcoming its "hiddenness" through "un-concealment." The individual's first realization about themself, is that they are there. Heidegger terms this first un-concealment as "there-being" or *Da-sein*.[16] Da-sein traditionally means existence; however, in following Darwin's use of existence as a "struggle for life," Heidegger sees Da-sein as a kind of existence that is continually involved in an understanding of its own Being.[17] As being different from other beings, Da-sein is the being that confronts its own existence.[18] The decisive way toward authenticity is to break out of facticity or thrownness—the everydayness of being - and come to one's senses and one's existence. This must include the possibility of death – "being-unto-death."[19] For Heidegger, however, the "existential" of death points to what he terms "relating-oneself-to-oneself" thereby, ignoring any interaction with others. One is merely thrown in the world and loses themself in it.[20]

Whereas Heidegger wants us to break out of the everydayness of life so as not to lose oneself, Arendt thinks the everydayness or thrownness of Da-sein is what it precisely means to be human. Moreover, Arendt's concept of natality replaces Da-sein's final completeness in "being-unto-death."[21] Hence, Arendt's concept of natality becomes an inverted precept of Heidegger's "being-unto-death." Instead of "being-unto-death" as the fundamental quality of human existence, Arendt proposes birth as the starting point for encounters and reflections on the world.[22] This was fully expressed in the notion of natality where the individual enters the world as a newcomer.[23] The positive impact natality has to the lives of humans and the cosmic order is clear:

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[11] Mark Lilla, *The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics* (New York Review of Book, 2016), 12.

[12] Jerome Kohn, "The World of Hannah Arendt," Hannah Arendt Papers Online, Library of Congress, 2001, https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/0103/arendt.html.

[13] David R. Cerbone, *Heidegger: A Guide for the Perplexed*. (New York: Continuum, 2008), 3.

[14] Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, ed. David F. Krell. (San Francisco: Harper Collins 1993. 42-44.

[15] Albert B. Hakim, *Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company), 1992. 758.

[16] Hakim, 758.

[17] Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, 46.

[18] Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei, "Death and Authenticity: Reflections on Heidegger, Rilke, Blanchot" *Existenz* 9, no 1 (2014): 53-62, http://www.existenz.us

[19] Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 105.

[20] Benhabib. 107.

[21] Ibid., 107.

[22] Ibid., xiv.

> The miracle that saves the world, the realm of human affairs, from its normal, "natural" ruin is ultimately the fact of natality, in which the faculty of action is ontologically rooted. It is, in other words, the birth of new [people] and the new beginning, the action they are capable of by virtue of being born. Only the full experience of this capacity can bestow upon human affairs faith and hope.[24]

By emphasizing life and natality (as will be underscored in *CE*), as opposed to death and impermanence, political activity was seen as an optimistic endeavor where human engagement was effectuated.[25] Moreover, this engagement with the world is authentic since human beings "share with others like themselves and with whom they are in constant communication and to whom they appear through speech and action."[26] Arendt's new philosophical discovery could not include Heidegger's remote and inaccessible philosophy; it could not address the issues that plagued the world.[27] As will be explicated in *CE*, natality will play a central role in the teaching and learning that must take place to address the challenges of the modern world and plan for a better future.

Another person who added to the development of Arendt's intellectual life was Karl Jaspers. Jaspers taught psychology at Freiburg and received notoriety for his work, *Psychology of Worldviews*.[28] Interestingly, as Arendt's dissertation advisor, Jaspers would analyze Arendt's work by referring to her discoveries as "pearls." Indeed, in commenting on Arendt's dissertation, Jaspers noticed "the pearls" she had grasped in the otherwise "rhetorical and preacherly" writings of Augustine.[29] The professional relationship of advisor to student eventually grew into a friendship based on a mutual respect for dialogue and an unremitting desire to ponder the world of ideas and human events.[30] As an influencer on her work, Jaspers enhanced in Arendt the ability to think trans-historically, that is to say, to think in the present with past thinkers outside the realm of tradition and history.[31]

Crisis in Education

Arendt's essay "Crisis in Education," first written in 1954 in *Partisan Review*, was part of a larger work entitled *Between Past and Future*, (1961). In the several essays of the latter work,

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[23] Wolfhart Totsching, "Arendt's Notion of Natality: An Attempt at Clarification," *Ideas y Valores* 66, no. 165 (2007) 327-346, http://dx.doi.org/10.15446/ideasyvalores.v66n165.55202

[24] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 247.

[25] Patrick Hayden, "Illuminating Hannah Arendt," ed. Patrick Hayden, (New York: Hannah Arendt: Key Concepts, 2014). 15

[26] Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), xiv.

[27] Jerome Kohn, "The World of Hannah Arendt" Hannah Arendt Papers Online, Library of Congress, 2001, https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/0103/arendt.html.

[28] Mark Lilla, *The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics*. (New York: New York Review of Books, 2001).

[29] M.T. Korsgaard, "Pearl diving and the Exemplary Way: Educational Notetaking and Taking note in Education," *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, (2020): 4, http//doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1743272

[30] Jon Nixon, *Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Friendship*. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), xi.

[31] Jerome Kohn, The World of Hannah Arendt, Hannah Arendt Papers Online, Library of Congress, 2001, https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/0103/arendt.html.

Arendt claims tradition has been shattered, and thereby, its authority or power will never be recovered.[32] The implications for such a claim are various and difficult to fully understand.[33] Yet, the theme of tradition is quite pronounced in *CE* and gives meaning to the other aspects of education that Arendt sees as critical: authority, the role of the school, and understanding the past as separate from tradition.

Arendt argues the crisis in education goes beyond merely "Why Johnny can't read,"[34] and that the wide-ranging challenges in education are not merely confined to America.[35] As an observer of political history and affairs, Arendt is aware that critical and dynamic events are not specific to any one country. In other words, the issues that emerged in the United States concerning education could find their way to other countries. Yet, Arendt claims the most extreme form of a crisis in education may well reside in America. The acceptance and influx of immigrants throughout the history of America only strengthened by its asseveration: Novus Ordo Seclorum—New World Order, resulted in the desire for what was new in all facets of American life.[36] However, this desire for what was new did not arise as a concept or political movement until the eighteenth century with Rousseau, whose ideas resulted in education turning into "an instrument of politics, and political activity itself was conceived as a form of education."[37] But for Arendt the marriage of politics and education has disastrous effects. Arendt believes education as a vehicle to propagate a regime reflects the activity of both tyrannical and utopian governments. According to Arendt, one who wishes to "educate" in the political realm is actually trying to coerce without force. It is for this reason Arendt makes the bold claim: "Education can play no part in politics, because in politics we always have to deal with those who are already educated."[38] Those who are already educated are adults who wish to advance their political agendas to others. Arendt believes newcomers (students) would be coerced in learning the dictates of the regime. Furthermore, the attempt to present a new utopian world to newcomers actually precludes them from participating in future political activities as adults. Arendt reasons that the so-called new political order adults would propose would be already old to newcomers.[39]As Arendt writes, "It is in the very nature of the human condition that each new generation grows into an old world."[40] If adults present to newcomers the ideas of new regime, that is to say, the old world, then you rob the young of their own ability to create something new.[41]

However true this might be, Arendt suggests the political temper of America can be too strong a force to eradicate. The notion of equality in America has, according to Arendt, intensified the crisis in education. The attempt to eliminate differences between, for instance, young and old or adults and children can have negative consequences to schooling, especially with the teacher's authority[42]

But these developments in education were based on three assumptions that emerged in modern society: the disruption of the natural experiences between adults and children due to the creation of a "child's world;" the impact of pragmatism and modern psychology on pedagogy; and the focus on skills-based learning as opposed to the teaching of what was viewed as "dead knowledge." [43] While these three assumptions highlighted the darker side of education, they did not prevent Arendt from simultaneously positing that education was the most fundamental activity of civilization, an activity that "never remains as it is but continuously renews itself through birth, through the arrival of new human beings."[44] This seemingly obvious yet profound observation about the realities of birth and the child as a newcomer underlies Arendt's hope for education.

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[32] Jerome Kohn, introduction to *Between Past and Future* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2006), vii.
[33] Ibid, vii.
[34] Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2006), 171.
[35] Ibid., 173.
[36] Ibid., 173.
[37] Ibid., 173.
[38] Ibid., 173.
[39] Ibid., 173.
[40] Ibid., 174.
[41] Ibid., 174.
[42] Ibid., 176-177.

According to Arendt, parents have introduced their children to the world. The child, as a new human being or newcomer, must be protected from the world; that protection traditionally resides in the family. Parents and children leave the world for the safety of private life against the public world[45] The child, in the process of developing, needs shelter and protection. The attempt, according to Arendt, to create an artificial child's world that generates a particular public life exposes children too soon to the public world and "destroys the necessary conditions for vital development and growth."[46] In the education realm, the young person's first introduction to the world is at school. Although Arendt believes the school should not create an imaginary world solely for children, the school should also not attempt to mimic the world or represent itself as the world.[47] Interestingly, the school then is the nexus between the family (private realm) and the world (public realm). The school becomes the bridge between the child's private life within the family and the public realm of the world.[48] The teacher, as an authority figure, presents the world to the child. Consequently, the teacher must take responsibility for the world, specifically being able to instruct students about the world. After the harsh realities of totalitarianism, the concept of authority in the political realm and more generally in public life, either has no role or a disputed one. This, however, cannot be the case for education; authority must exist and be maintained since the teacher is responsible for the instruction of the world to students. However, Arendt sees the risk in the public realm's disrespect for authority seeping into the private realm of the family and school. This becomes apparent as the forces of mass society deadens the modern person's responsibility for the world that is necessary for the rearing of their children.[49] A great chasm exists between Arendt's jarring observation and the original spirit she ascertains in America, one that is shaped by the New World Order and the animated spirit of revolution and newness it fosters. While America, broadly speaking, had this revolutionary spirit, it took a conservative stance in regard to education.[50] To Arendt, education's role is to "cherish and protect something—the child against the world, the world against the child, the new against the old, the old against the new."[51] This, however, cannot be the stance in the political realm. According to Arendt, conserving the political defends and safeguards the status quo. For there to be improvement in the world, we must heed the words of Hamlet who recognized a distorted world, but also understood the opportunity to, as he states "set it right." Considering this, teachers must educate so their students can set the world right.[52] The spaces and paths for children to be revolutionary are available if the teacher conserves the child's newness: "Exactly for the sake of what is new and revolutionary in every child, education must be conservative; it must preserve the newness and introduce it as a new thing into an old world."[53] Put another way, education's conservatism and the child's newness work together to produce something revolutionary and that goes beyond learning the past chronologically or based on tradition.

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[43] Ibid., 179.
[44] Ibid., 182.
[45] Ibid., 183.
[46] Ibid., 183.
[47] Ibid., 185.
[48] Ibid., 185.
[49] Ibid., 188.
[50] Ibid., 188.
[51] Ibid., 188.
[52] Ibid., 189.

While there is always newness in teaching and learning, education qua education must continually return to the past. Indeed, educators, according to Arendt, must facilitate educational experiences that are based on both what has gone before the present and what is yet to come; hence, there must be a great respect for the past. The conscious recognition of such a reality was not considered during the historical development of Roman-Christian civilizations before the Renaissance; the past and tradition were already associated with conceptual understandings that peoples of these civilizations had of the world. But to Arendt, educators are not in that position today. Speaking of education, Arendt claims, "by its very nature it cannot forego either authority or tradition, and yet must proceed in a world that is neither structured by authority nor held together by tradition."[54]

This paradoxical predicament, that centers in on the actual crisis in education, leads Arendt to argue that all adults, not just those in education, must agree to offer our children the authority and respect for the past conducive to an educational upbringing separate and different from the adult world. This desire to protect children from the adult, public, and political worlds originate from love. For Arendt, education hinges on the decisions we make as adults about the world and children. Do we love the world enough to hold ourselves responsible for it? And, do we love our children enough to protect them from the adult world and allow them opportunities to commence something revolutionary not yet seen by us?

Although Arendt begins to close *CE* with this observation, there are no specific suggestions as to the meaningful ways teachers present the past to students. However, looking at Arendt's broader ideas concerning the past, her understanding of tradition, and her unique positing of the pearl diver metaphor, may offer possibilities and questions for teaching and learning.

Restoring the Past by Pearl Diving

Arendt explores the past by following a "fragmentary historiography."[55] As someone who perceives the modern world negatively, Arendt claims tradition has been shattered and can no longer respond to the modern age.[56] Consequently, tradition must be understood in fragments for it to respond to present situations.[57] To Arendt, the stakes for such an undertaking is essential for the survival of the modern world. As Passerin d'Entreves indicated concerning Arendt's uses of the past: "To reestablish a linkage with the past is not an antiquarian exercise; on the contrary, without the critical reappropriation of the past our temporal horizon becomes disrupted, our experience precarious, and our identity more fragile"[58] But in Arendt's mind, this means identifying the "lost potentials" of historical events and to reify them as living topics of study in our present times.[59] In other words, we must think, as Arendt argued metaphorically, "without a banister."[60] By thinking without the guidance of traditional interpretations or categories, the person is free to make the event their own. Undoubtedly, this underscores the responsibility the teacher has for presenting the past to students since they will assist in identifying the ground upon which students find their place in the world and at the same time to, ironically, liberate the past from its tradition.

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[53] Ibid., 189.

[54] Ibid., 191.

[55] Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), x.

[56] Benhabib, x.

[57] Lovisa Bergdahl & Elisabet Langmann, "Time for Values: Responding Educationally to the Call from the Past," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 37, (2018), 378. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11217-017-9591-2.pdf

Arendt's broader ideas concerning history or the past in the form of tradition, can be found in Arendt's *Men in Dark Times* (1955). In the essay honoring the noted literary critic, translator, and essayist, Walter Benjamin, Arendt indicates Benjamin's view of the past as similar to her own in "that the break in tradition and the loss of authority which occurred in his lifetime, were irreparable, and he concluded that he had to discover new ways of dealing with the past"[61] Benjamin would recover past events the way a collector might, filling one's domicile with various items representing periods in history that did not connect with each other, but resonated with the habitant and created for them something new. Similar to the revolutionary, the collector's passion for old objects separated from their historical context, ushers in a new world that liberates the collected objects from their utility.[62] Arendt continues by understanding the collector as a destroyer; one who gives objects unique qualities and "cleans[es] the chosen object of everything that is typical about it."[63] Benjamin would conduct this activity with quotes. It should be remembered that Benjamin was a literary critic; therefore, language was an important element in his oeuvre, specifically collecting quotations. For Benjamin, quotes were not used as evidence or support for an argument. Instead, quotes were the primary work taken out of their original context and rearranged to create something new. The quotes "were able to prove their raison d'etre in a free-floating state"[64] The focus on quotes reflected, according to Arendt, Benjamin's method that he termed "drilling." Drilling was about seeking out words and ideas in their isolation, separate from predetermined definitions and explanations for people to comprehend.[65]

A specific quality about quotes, according to Benjamin, was that they name things. Truth, according to Benjamin, was an "acoustical phenomenon." The act of naming presented a stronger philosophical truth than speaking. Interestingly, Benjamin believed it was Adam in *Genesis* as opposed to Plato who was the father of philosophy because he named things in the Garden of Eden.[66] Moreover, words were to be liberated from their utilitarian uses and understood as poetic utterances and linguistic fragments.[67] Based on these ideas, Arendt thinks Benjamin thought poetically. The poetic thinker is, according to Arendt, like a pearl diver who searches the ocean floor for pearls and corals that have, in their natural development, undergone deterioration; but, nonetheless are considered important because,

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[58] Maurizio Passerin d'Entreves,"Hannah Arendt*"* in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford: Stanford University, 2019), https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/arendt/

[59] Passerin d'Entreves.

[60] Jerome Kohn, introduction to *Between Past and Future* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), xvi.

[61] Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, (Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1968), 193.

[62] Arendt, 197.

[63] Ibid., 200.

[64] Ibid., 202.

[65] Ibid., 202-203.

[66] Ibid., 203-204.

[67] Ibid., 205.

> The process of decay is at the same time a process of crystallization, that in the depth of the sea, into which sinks and is dissolved what was once alive, some things 'suffer a sea-change,' and survive in new crystallized forms and shapes that remain immune to the elements, as though they waited only for the pearl diver who one day will come down to them and bring them up into the world of the living.[68]

As Benjamin used quotes to express something new and meaningful, moderns recover the past by seizing the range of historical events (the pearls) to develop imaginative ideas for the future. In this way, Arendt's thinking helps "bridge the gap between the old (tradition), and the new (change)."[69] In other words, instead of seeing the past as conflicting with the modern world, the past becomes fertile ground for new and imaginative responses to modernity and opportunities to pave the way for a better future. Similarly, teachers leverage the past as a salutary element for students' imagination and creativity. As has been noted, Arendt argues in *CE* that education is always attentive to the past and that the teacher finds themself mediating between past events and future developments. The way for the teacher to engage students about the past is to intentionally retrieve and examine past ideas and values that speak to students' present situations and challenges.[70] The teacher does this by taking on the activity of the pearl diver who uncovers the remains of the past in original ways.[71]

Issues with the Pearl Diver

Yet, questions arise: What criteria does the teacher use to determine the treasures that are valuable enough to apply to the issues of the day? Does not the "pearl diver" have a license to decide what is valuable and what is not?[72] These questions are decisive since the decision to choose certain treasures over others may reflect or result in dogmatic or even sinister educational plans. As Arendt indicated in *CE*, totalitarian and utopian regimes advanced their objectives by educating the children.

In order to respond to these questions, one must first understand Arendt's ideas on the person's relation to time, the past, and the future. For Arendt, the past is a living force; it is not something that humans must carry as a burden but a reality that they live with. Moreover, the person's existence in relation to the past breaks the chronological development of it. The person "lives in the interval between past and future."[73] This is not the present as commonly understood, but a "gap" where the person takes a stand breaking the chronology or succession of time. It is in this gap where the "beginning of a beginning"[74] can occur.

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[68] Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, (Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1968), 205-206.

[69] Mordechai Gordon, "Introduction," in *Hannah Arendt and Education: Renewing Our Common World,* ed. Mordechai Gordon (New York: Routledge, 2001), 5.

[70] Lovisa Bergdahl, Elisabet Langmann "Time for Values: Responding Educationally to the Call from the Past, *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 37, (2018), 373. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11217-017-9591-2.pdf

[71] Ramon Mihaila, Georghe H. Popescu, & Elvira Nica "Educational Conservatism and Democratic Citizenship in Hannah Arendt," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 48, no. 9 (2016), 923. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2015.1091283

[72] Peter Berkowitz review of *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social*, by Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The New Republic* (June 14, 1999): 51.https://peterberkowitz.wordpress.com/1999/06/14/the-pearl-diver/

[73] Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 10.

[74] Arendt, 10.

Based on this understanding, both teachers and students exist in that gap, taking a stand and disrupting the time continuum. This, then, can be an opportunity for discussing the past educationally. When the teacher, as pearl diver, presents the past to students, there must be an understanding that the student learns from the past in relation to their existence in this gap. Hence, as opposed to studying history merely chonologically without any connection to students' present circumstances, the educational experience centers on that very connection. And as the student relates meaningfully to the past event, Arendt's insight on natality emerges. The student begins a beginning concerning something new and revolutionary.

Lovisa Bergdahl and Elisabeth Langmann touch on this idea with their work on values education. They argue for a middle way that can be achieved through Arendt's view of the past. According to Bergdahl and Lagmann, educators have generally either followed a conservative approach or a critical/radical approach to teaching the past. In the conservative approach, teachers transfer the accepted values, mores, and practices of a specific culture and tradition to the next generation. The content being passed down is objectively good and worth teaching to every successive generation without concern over circumstances. An example would be the teaching of the novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. Since its publication in 1960, the novel has reached the desks of heterogenous classrooms throughout the decades in the United States. In the critical/radical approach, teachers believe content that has been passed down is tainted by the desire of those in power to control the narrative, learning experiences, and values. Instead, teaching and learning, along with the chosen content, must look toward creating a better future as opposed to retrieving and admiring the past. Hence, classic books such as *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and many others, must be reviewed once again to determine if their value, as deemed through history, continue to resonate with today's students.

Against this backdrop, Bergdahl and Langmann see a middle path, a "Third Way" that leverages the past in more meaningful and beneficial ways. Following Arendt's thinking on the person's place between the past and future, they argue,

> The fostering task of the teacher is neither to strengthen nor to break the next generations' ties with the past and the tradition, but to let children and young people remain at the threshold between past and future by critically engaging in those values that previous generations have cherished and found valuable to pass on.[75]

As with Arendt's position of the person existing in the gap between the past and future, students are at the threshold and take their stand by critically exploring the so-called accepted values of a tradition. It is not conservative in that the values are not blindly accepted and seamlessly applied to the present. It is not radical in that teachers and students do not dismiss the tradition they find themselves in, but rather respect its force and influence and accept it as worthy of study.

Implementing this in lessons, requires teachers, as pearl divers, to first identify the goods and values a certain tradition holds and consider them as "contested objects of study"[76] to be explored, debated, and questioned. In making decisions concerning the topics of the past, the teacher exercises educational judgment about "which stories and values of the past are important to study

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75. Lovisa Bergdahl, Elisabet Langmann, "Time for Values: Responding Educationally to the Call from the Past," *Studies in Philosophy of Education* 37, (2018). 378. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11217-017-9591-2.pdf

76. Ibid., 378.

today and why."[77] This indicates the high level of responsibility the teacher must have for lessons and curricula and the keen sense of the issues facing students today. It also speaks to why the authority of the teacher is so important to Arendt. Moreover, it places the life of the student in direct contact with the "fragmented historiography" Arendt embraces. In other words, students, as newcomers, add their voices to the fragmented layers amassed throughout history and that formulate a tradition. To apply an example from the American experience, the teacher would present the value of liberty, albeit defined and applied differently throughout the course of the country's history, as a contested object of study. It should also be noted, however, that the value of liberty as presented by the teacher through a particular lens and tradition, may overlook or ignore other key ideas about liberty; therefore, critical exploration and inquiry based on the object is all the more necessary.[78]

M.T. Korsgaard offers yet another perspective on how the teacher prudently chooses the pearls to be studied. Exploring both Benjamin's and Arendt's perspectives on the past, there are three criteria in choosing an event from the past (pearl) for exploration. First, the pearls cannot exclusively consist of well-known common objects of study within a tradition, (mentioned also by Bergdahl and Langmann), but also lesser-known fragments from history that have been ignored or put aside. Second, the collected pearls must have a redemptive quality to the past and a functional element to the present. The redemptive quality is taken from Walter Benjamin's view that unless we identify pearls that save those who have gone before us, those from the past can still be unjustly treated by those in the present. Lastly, the pearls must relate with the truths and facts of history, that is to say, they must be able to reflect the whole or essence of the historical event.[79]

Both Bergdahl and Langmann's and Korsgaard's approaches to Arendt's educational teaching ameliorate to a degree the issues concerning the pearl diver arbitrarily choosing whatever pearl they see fit to present. However, one cannot escape the reality that teachers still may lack the prudence, proper motivation, or historical understanding, to find efficacious pearls from the past.

What would Arendt have chosen as pearls during her study of history? The answer may offer further guidance for teachers instructing as pearl divers. It is clear that Arendt's essay on Walter Benjamin details some sense of the method she would endorse when looking for pearls from the past. To recall, the method can be understood in her analysis of Benjamin as a collector who strips the items from their utilitarian uses and historical context to make them their own. This, of course, refers to his collection of quotes and Arendt's interpretation that Benjamin thought poetically. Although it would be problematic to strip the past event from its historical context, the pearl as representative of the historical period, is like Benjamin's collection of quotes, made anew by being personally relatable to the student and used to building the future.

As a political theorist, Arendt came to see how the Greek polis could caste a light on today's political activity[80] and how the American Revolution was the exemplar for political foundations.[81] Arendt posits that these two examples from the past can initiate something new for the future. Dana Villa[82] is right to point out that in the same essay on Benjamin, Arendt applies the pearl diver metaphor to the Greek polis as a model moderns can seize upon; it is “at the bottom of the sea” of political life.[83] The Greek polis speaks to moderns not as a historical reference to be copied, but as an active and interactive force in the political.[84] By leveraging the Greek polis this way, one recognizes its agency in the modern world.[85]The Greek polis offered a domain for individuals to engage with each other, exercising their freedom.[86] Going back to antiquity, specifically the Greek polis, would remind moderns of freedom and the importance of engaging with each other.

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[77] Ibid., 378.

[78] Ibid., Langmann, 379.

[79] M.T. Korsgaard, "Pearl diving and the Exemplary Way: Educational Notetaking and Taking note in Education," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 53, no. 5 (2020), 4. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1743272

[80] Korsgaard, 4.

[81] Ernst Vollrath, "Hannah Arendt Views the United States," in *Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss*: *German Emigres and American Political Thought After WWII,* eds. Peter Graf Kielmansegg, Horst Mewes, & Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt. (Washington, D.C.: Cambridge University Press, 1997). 51.

[82] Dana Villa, *Arendt*, (New York: Routledge, 2021).

Could not, however, the pearls, that are lifted from the depths of the sea, actually be unrealistic or idealized views of the past event? Indeed, it has been argued that Arendt’s admiration for the Greeks’ implementation of the polis might have bordered on the romantic and quixotic.[87] But Arendt understood that the Greek polis could not be seamlessly passed on generation after generation in the modern age. In point of fact, by choosing the Greek polis as the pearl, Arendt is revivifying not its specific structure, but its commitment to the political, and in that, it possesses potential for the modern world.[88]

In regard to her thinking about an authentic political community, however, Arendt chooses the American Republic. What Arendt saw uniquely in the American Founding was the practice of “founding” and “constituting;” the Founders embarked on the beginning of a new nation. To Arendt, what occurred at the American Revolution was an act of political freedom and a beginning.[89] To ensure the American Revolution becomes one of the “pearls” to study, it must be honored for its importance. In her salutary remarks on the 200th anniversary of the American Revolution, Arendt asserted that the freedom that was reflected in the American Revolution can continue to offer hope and guidance for others confronted with oppression and injustice.[90] Interestingly, this was not reminiscent of the Greek polis, which was to rule and govern, but in the Roman conception, which was to establish and preserve.[91] Consequently, the American Revolution could be a catalyst for people to use to create in the modern world. Arendt also came to see that there were “lost treasures” in revolutions.[92] Arendt’s perspectives of the Hungarian Uprising of 1956 and the Prague Spring of 1968 were examples of how revolutions were events in history that brought people together to go beyond the limits of their existence and claim their freedoms.[93] In essence, all three examples: The Greek polis, the American Revolution, and the act of revolution are analyzed in a way where they are, "stripped" of their historical context and tradition and used to respond to future challenges and questions. For Arendt, the political could be further enhanced by the Greek polis and the American Revolution. They were two salient examples of how people could assemble, affirm themselves in a community, and exercise their freedoms. So, too, the teacher must find examples from the past that speak to students conceptually, not merely historically, and foster imaginative thoughts and creative beginnings.

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[83] Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, 204.

[84] Miriam Leonard, “Hannah Arendt and the Ancients.” *Classical Philology*. 113. (2018), 4. https://www.ucl.ac.uk./european-institute/news/2015/oct/hannak-arendt-and-ancients

[85] Ibid., 4.

[86] Tomas Wedine and Carl Wilen, “Ancient Equality Against Modern Democracy: Resources of Critique of Hannah Arendt and Ellen Wood.” *Distinkton: Journal of Social Theory.* 21. (2022), 26. https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2019.1653347

[87] Peter Berkowitz review of *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt’s Concept of the Social*, by Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The New Republic* (June 14, 1999): 51. https://peterberkowitz.wordpress.com/1999/06/14/the-pearl-diver/

[88] Ernst Vollrath, “Hannah Arendt View the United States,” in *Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss: German Emigres and American Political Thought After World War II.* Eds. Peter Graf Kielmansegg, Horst Mewes, & Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt. (Washington, D.C.: Cambridge University Press, 1997). 51.

[89] Gerhard Beiser, “Hannah Arendt and the Myth of Freedom.” *Topos.* 19. (2008), 48-61. http://journals.ehu.lt/index.php/topos/article/view/695

[90] Beiser, 53.

[91] Ernst Vollrath, “Hannah Arendt View the United States,” in *Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss: German Emigres and American Political Thought After World War II.* Eds. Peter Graf Kielmansegg, Horst Mewes, & Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt. (Washington, D.C.: Cambridge University Press, 1997). 51.

[92] Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, (New York: Penguin Classics, 2006), 5.

[93] Stefan Auer, “The Lost Treasure of the Revolution,” *Eurozine*, (2006). https://www.eurozine.com/the-lost-treasure-of-the-revolution/

It is clear as pearl diver, the teacher hunts for treasures that, according to Bergdahl and Langmann, are contested objects of study honored in particular traditions, but are nonetheless explored and critiqued for their appropriateness, meaning, and applicability in the modern world. Through rigorous discussion and critique of these values found in a tradition, newcomers engage in the quest for values in their lives. For M.T. Korsgaard, teachers choose treasures that are less obvious and known within a tradition. Teachers must choose those events that tradition or scholarship discarded or deemed unworthy of learning. Lastly, teachers need to choose treasures that represent the whole of the history being discussed; it should involve an event, story, or artifact, that details, for example, the founding of a Republic, the horrors of a mass genocide, or the liberation of a people. We may find, however, the most fruitful guidance for the teacher as pearl diver is from Arendt herself. Arendt's acknowledgment of the uniqueness of the Greek polis and the American Founding speak to how all three can be analyzed separate from their historical place and time and inspire moderns to begin something new, to participate in natality.

Conclusion

Arendt's ideas about natality and the uses of the past in *CE* along with her pearl diver metaphor and unique views on tradition, advises educators on ways to enhance educational experiences today. While questions still remain about the motivations and reasons teachers have in choosing past events for study and the possibility of shaping the chosen treasures to satisfy their personal ideas, goals, or desires, the ability for students, as newcomers, to innovate, imagine, and create with an eye toward the future is still a worthy and noble goal. Bergdahl and Langmann's along with Korsgaard's views take the best of Arendt's educational teaching, equipping teachers with methods of instruction that makes history interesting and evocative, hopefully eliciting in students the natality Arendt argues as vital to education and a response to a decaying world. Moreover, how Arendt thinks about her own treasures of the past, namely the Greek polis and the American Revolution, may serve as a model for educators to use as they consider their own pearls in lessons and curriculum development. In the end, Hannah Arendt's educational teaching, the metaphor of the pearl diver, and views on tradition, offer a path for teachers to plunge into the profundities of past ages, identifying the crystallized artifacts for their students, so they may set the world right.

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Dr. Frank Giuseffi is an Assistant Professor of Education and Chair of Doctoral Studies at William Woods University in Fulton, Missouri. He has written and presented on instructional strategies, critical thinking, adult learning, and the philosophy of education to regional and national education organizations. Dr. Giuseffi has edited three books: *Emerging Self-Directed Learning Strategies in the Digital Age* (2018), *Self-Directed Learning Strategies in Adult Educational Contexts* (2019), and *Enhancing Teaching and Learning with Socratic Educational Strategies* (2021). He also published a book entitled, *How the Socratic Method Engenders Authentic Educational*

Experiences (2021). Dr. Giuseffi holds undergraduate degrees from the University of Central Missouri, a Master’s degree in Liberal Arts from St John’s College in Santa Fe, New Mexico, a Master’s degree in Curriculum and Instruction from William Woods University, and a Doctorate in Education from Lindenwood University.

Neoliberalism and Education
Bronwen M. A. Jones and Stephen J. Ball, Eds.

Routledge (April 4, 2023). 192 pp., $160.00. First edition, hardcover.
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Reviewed by Jessy Cheung, Western Illinois University

Abstract

The editors of this book respond to the difficulty of defining neoliberalism as an analytic category by conceptualizing the subject as a dispositif in relation to education. This enables the formation of a web of meaning that involves local, global, ethical, social, and personal throughlines. The histories and philosophies of neoliberalism are acknowledged, while 'actually existing' examples are centered for analysis. The variety of examples presented in this curated volume match the variegated nature of neoliberalism. Educators, scholars, and students will be asked to consider their relationship with education, with each other, and with their individual selves against the backdrop of market logic.

Keywords: *neoliberalism, dispositif, commercialization, marketization, academic capital, resistance*

Commensurate with neoliberalism as a "variegated, partial, and hybridized process" (p. 43), *Neoliberalism and Education* presents a variety of cases that examine the interplay of the two subjects across local, global, ethical, social, and personal throughlines. The book encourages scholars and practitioners to consider how we are made up as educational subjects and what it means to be educated—with and against the forces of commercialization and marketization.

The book consists of 11 chapters, the first an introduction to the volume and the subsequent 10 curated from previously published material. The editors, in their opening chapter, lightly trace the history of—and the difficulty in defining—neoliberalism. They propose conceptualizing neoliberalism as a *dispositif*, a "heterogeneous and polymorphic ensemble … cohered and connected by a particular web of meaning, a theme, a concept" (p. 8). They contend that the relations between "varying practices, processes, technologies, discourses, buildings, gestures, signs, etc. … visibilise the dispositif and are critical to naming it" (ibid). This stance functions as a set of criteria for their selection of the chapters.

The editorial decision to base the book on the mechanisms and structures of neoliberalism results in the book's chief strength: its arrangement. While the chapters are varied in their approaches to neoliberalism, they are in dialogue with and build on each other. Conceptualizations and themes are recurring, but not redundant. For instance, Jessop presents four main forms of neoliberalism based on theory and history (particularly of the United Kingdom), and they are useful for analytical purposes. Kamat, in studying urbanism and education in Hyderabad, posits the notion of "actually existing neoliberalism" (p. 65) to underscore how "neoliberalism does not manifest itself in a uniform and identical manner the world over" (ibid). Baltodano, in turn, juxtaposes the local focus of Kamat with a systematic review of how neoliberalism has led to the demise of education as a public good, while offering its history in America just as Jessop does for the UK.

As another example, Riep analyzes the ways in which a multinational publishing and education company creates credibility "around efficacy based on legible, measurable and auditable techniques" (p. 101). Legitimacy is created through social impact which stems from commercial activities which are driven by legitimacy, etc. In contrast, Holloway and Keddie present an Australian case of commercialization in education that simultaneously recognizes autonomy and yields educationally productive results. However, when public schools demonstrate that they *can* be profitable, they invite the consequential question of whether they *should* be profitable. Is there really autonomy, when the rules of capitalism are so embedded in neoliberalized societies? Creative answers to this question are presented in the subsequent chapters. They focus on sites of governance and sites of resistance—and the space between them that allow for the subversion or rejection of neoliberalism.

The global, local, ethical, social, and personal aspects of education—and the ways that neoliberalism interfaces with those aspects—are considered throughout this volume. At times, this intertwining dialogue across and between chapters incites cynicism and frustration: one soon recognizes the difficulty in discerning whether neoliberalism has been deflected and resisted, or if it has found ways to co-opt its critics to revitalize itself and ensure its continuity. Some alleviation is graciously provided: Peck conjectures that because of neoliberalism's variegated, partial, and hybridized nature, it is always in a state of necessary incompletion—"it must always dwell among its others, along with the rather cold comfort that its ultimate destination is unattainable" (p. 39). Alternatives will never be completely expunged nor entirely erased nor rendered inert and from this condition emerges the possibility for other imaginaries.

As such, educators in search of prompts for how we view education and how we understand ourselves and each other as educated subjects will find this curated volume helpful. Scholars seeking examples of "actually existing neoliberalism" will find them here, along with gateways to further investigations and possibilities. And students in our contemporary moment yearning for language to name their struggles and differences in power structures, for strategies on how to negotiate a sense of identity beyond that of *homo economicus*, and for a (renewed) vision of education as a public good and as the bedrock of democracy, will find some solace within the pages.

Jessy Cheung is currently in his first year of doctoral studies at Western Illinois University, pursuing an EdD in Organizational Justice, Equity, & Inclusion. He previously graduated from WIU's College Student Personnel program. Before returning to the United States, he spent a few years managing training and development programs for the Alberta Council of Disability Services in his Canadian hometown of Calgary. He aims to be a scholar-practitioner in higher education and student affairs.