

Editors' Note

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This issue of *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* explores the links between theory and practice in education and information studies. Critical pedagogy has a long history of supporting a dialectic between theory and practice through its notions of praxis, conscientization and resistance. As the pieces in this issue of *InterActions* highlight, the relationship between theory and practice is one that requires constant intentional effort.

Primary, secondary, and higher (K-20) education face challenges on all fronts, especially in areas related to funding, accountability, and equity. These obstacles will likely persist through the coming years and continue to exert great force in shaping the priorities for our fields. As scholars, educators, and practitioners, we must remain hopeful and active, as these pieces encourage us to be, through continued dialogue and collective efforts to prevail in cultivating greater justice and deeply inspired societies.

A new horizon in the world of education and information studies is the emergence of digital humanities, which draws on the rich intellectual and moral traditions of humanities scholarship and pairs those with the visual and imaginative potential of digital technologies and computational methods.

Thinking across the questions of critical pedagogy raised by some of the authors in this issue, digital humanities may provide invaluable tools for creating new forms of critical pedagogy that continue to ask relevant questions about forms of privilege and oppression with 21st century education and find ways to empower the ever increasingly diverse populations of students and learners in educational systems across the globe.

One of the leading experts in the field of digital humanities is Johanna Drucker, Breslauer Professor of Bibliography in Information Studies. Artist and visual theorist, Drucker studies alphabet historiography, typography, and printing technologies and has published in variety of areas, including digital aesthetics and the history of book arts. We are pleased to present this topic-focused interview with Professor Drucker on digital humanities in which Jennifer Berdan inquires about Dr. Drucker's new collaboratively written book. Drucker speaks to the field's history and future in the academy and its emerging programs, such as UCLA's new graduate certificate and minor in digital humanities. The answers to Berdan's questions reveal Professor Drucker's unique and critical approach to the study of visual knowledge representation and how computational techniques from digital humanities create new possibilities for the analysis of texts and how, in her words, "it has a crucial role to play in every aspect of information studies, education, and the broader inquiries and roles of the university". She calls for the

reinsertion of humanistic methods into digital humanities to complement the positivist work and the current limits of modeling interpretation. Drucker, like many authors in this issue, reminds us that observer-dependent models of interpretation are constitutive forces that shape the production of knowledge.

In his provocative piece, “Unscientific Science and the Insignificance of ‘Significance’: James, Kuhn, and Flyvbjerg,” Samuel Rocha raises questions about the notions of science and scientific reasoning. His critique problematizes the concept of “theory into practice” within the field of education in order to prompt a larger intellectual dialog about how educators and social scientists define and privilege the construction of knowledge within K-20 education. As a philosopher of education, Rocha argues that the current idealization of theory into practice uses too narrow of an understanding of what constitutes practice, thereby promoting a problematic dichotomy that educational researchers have continued to nurture in their discourse. Linking together the work of William James, Thomas Kuhn, Bent Flyvbjerg, and Friedrich Nietzsche, the article casts forward an argument that educators and social scientists must adopt a genealogy of theory and practice. This genealogy makes use of the widest possible interpretation of thinking in which thinking is a form of action and practice; it rejects instrumentalized interpretations of theory and practice as simple measurable outcomes of education. Through such a genealogy, Rocha envisions a realignment of education and knowledge production that favors the active and vital labor of thinking as the preeminent valued practice and outcome of education.

Perhaps, Rocha’s admonishing of education’s instrumentalization does not stray too far from the critiques of John Dewey, who insisted the aim of education was education itself, or of Paulo Freire, who most notably viewed education and teaching as an intervention in the world that proceeded from a deep consciousness of how the world works and a continuous reflection upon one’s role in it. This emphasis on thinking, particularly on critical thought, as a cherished outcome of education is at the center of this issue’s articles written by Rolf Straubhaar and Dalya Markovich. Both authors unveil the tensions that materialize in striving to apply critical pedagogy to real educational spaces that serve underrepresented and marginalized youth. Their articles suggest an ongoing necessity to re-imagine critical pedagogy in schooling and ask whether the critical pedagogy principles one venerates actually work in practice.

Straubhaar utilizes storytelling from his own experiences as an educator to reflect upon why critical pedagogy is seemingly so easy to distort, ignore, or abandon in the face of the efficiency and achievement imperatives created by standardized testing. Markovich illustrates for readers the true dilemmas experienced by parents and teachers that wish to disrupt inequality and marginalization, but do not agree about whether the pathway to such intervention

lies in critical pedagogy or adherence to the achievement-ism that is dominantly valued. Straubhaar and Markovich help readers connect the dilemmas Rocha raises about education's reductionism to global fears about how best to actually facilitate students' and communities' acquisition of information, knowledge, and skills that lead to their empowerment *and* social mobility. This is the educational panacea that everyone evidently seeks, but educational programs seem to rarely foster. Nevertheless, critical pedagogues in the Freirean tradition—and our issue's authors—are neither fatalistic about our common future nor dismissive of the possibilities that lie within our collective imagination to dream something different and in doing so, create what we dream. The editors of *InterActions* encourage our readers to reconsider their own praxis in addressing social justice and the academic priorities shaping our fields.