

## Editor's Note

We are publishing this issue as we move through uncertain, difficult times with the global COVID-19 pandemic, in a country led by a president who blocked COVID-19 testing months earlier to keep infection numbers appearing low. In times like these, complacency in the face of structural inequality is not an option. The effects of a system predicated on whiteness will keep those with existing privilege the safest and most protected. Support, care, and virtual togetherness are most important in this era of necessary distance.

The Winter 2020 issue of *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* exists squarely within the journal's mission to amplify critical perspectives and social justice. Each piece in this issue asks salient questions about how white supremacy and patriarchy undergird systems of language, education, and literacy within the United States.

This issue begins with an article that expands our understanding of the negotiation that occurs between the racial, social class, and gender identities of first-generation Latina graduate students.

Lorena Camargo Gonzalez unravels the different roles and responsibilities that Latinas balance while navigating higher education. In “‘The weight we carry in our backpack is not the weight of our books, it's the weight of our community!’: Latinas Negotiating Identity and Multiple Roles,” Camargo Gonzalez offers powerful vignettes from 11 Latinas on their lived experiences as doctoral students. Through the use of Critical Race Theory, LatCrit, and Chicana Feminist Epistemologies, Camargo Gonzalez centers the intersectional identities of these women to demonstrate how roles and identities—daughter, sister, mother, wife, and immigrant, to name a few—shape their daily experiences. Camargo Gonzalez advances the literature on the nuances of Latinas' educational trajectories and adds to knowledge on the support that Latinas need to thrive in higher education.

Next, “A Review of Daily Conversations and Practices at Home: Exploring Practices that Promote Early Literacy in Spanish-speaking Homes and Home-School Interactions” features a comprehensive and integrative literature review about research on the early literacy practices in Spanish-speaking families as well as early literacy home-school initiatives. M. Cecilia Valdés eloquently weaves established theoretical approaches of child development with previous research conducted on observed literacy skills frequently found in low-income, Spanish-speaking homes. Valdés evaluates a multitude of studies that address the complexity of literacy and recommends that future research must seek to account for diverse customs, acculturation practices, migration narratives, and duration of American residency when considering the early literacy processes common in Latinx youth.

This issue's two book reviews each highlight nuanced, critical conversations around Blackness and racism in the United States. First, Nicholas Havey addresses the power of language—specifically Black English—through his review of John McWhorter's book, *Talking Back, Talking Black*. McWhorter utilizes a critical lens on how Black English has evolved and is understood today, while also debunking the myth that “Black English is just bad English,” a stance which is both paternalistic and steeped in white supremacy. Havey's review emphasizes that *Talking Back, Talking Black* is an excellent primer to introduce Black English to the white masses most in need of understanding its existence, as well as anyone looking to empirically support the clear linguistic differences they speak, hear, interpret, and experience.

In conversation with similar topics, Tonia Guida's review of George Yancy's book, *Backlash: What Happens When We Talk Honestly about Racism in America*, underscores how the white imaginary shapes how Black bodies are perceived and devalued in America. Intersecting with gender, sexuality, and even who is considered “human,” Yancy opens up a dialog around race to facilitate nuanced understandings of racism, to unsettle assumptions for white people who may not believe they are racist, and to highlight the ongoing violence on Black lives today. Guida emphasizes the value of this work, recommending it for “anyone who is willing to be vulnerable enough to deeply examine their own white racism” and stating that it “should be on all anti-racist racists' [a white person who knows they are racist] reading lists.”

Lastly, Linda Crook's review of *Topographies of Whiteness: Mapping Whiteness in Library and Information Science*, edited by Gina Schlesselman-Tarango, confronts the assumed neutrality of Library and Information Science (LIS) to problematize how whiteness operates in the field. Bringing together diverse perspectives, the book utilizes different frameworks to address whiteness, such as critical race theory and intersectional feminism, in order to situate itself within the growing discipline of anti-racism in LIS. Although, as Crook highlights, the book is theory-heavy, it nonetheless provides a crucial platform for social justice in library and information science-related spaces.

And as a closing note to this editorial essay, the editorial team here at *InterActions* would like to offer our own message of care to our community and those beyond—we are together, we will fight for social justice, and we will get through this unexpected and uncertain time.