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Editor's Introduction

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University of New Mexico

It is with great pride that we present to you the first issue of *Intersections: Critical Issues in Education* from the Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies (LLSS) department of the University of New Mexico (UNM).

This online journal originated with an idea presented to faculty members while I was a graduate student completing my studies in the Educational Thought and Sociocultural Studies (ETSS) program at UNM. The idea centered on the question that, if other universities had fostered publishing opportunities for their students, why couldn't our university do the same? As someone who was trained in what would be considered one of the most critical programs on campus, I also felt it was imperative that this online journal focus on publishing pieces immersed in critical thought and engaged with the most critical issues in education. The idea became 'real' as it took the form of a small working group composed of graduate students and supportive faculty. Here the "I" shifts to "we," as this journal became a collective work and community-led action.

Over the last couple of years, our small group has been working toward the goal of presenting this inaugural issue of *Intersections*. Through our discussions, we realized that what we were creating was not simply a publishing opportunity for our own students at the University of New Mexico, but also a vital space to showcase academic pieces centered on critical issues that continue to challenge the field of education—those connected to race, gender, class, the body, feminist thought, coloniality, and more. Given the current political climate, the publication of *Intersections* has become a necessity. As academics of color and allies, we believe it is our responsibility to promote pieces that challenge the spectrum of oppressive hierarchies that continue to afflict the current U.S. educational system and the global community.

Everyone on our editorial team also felt strongly that *Intersections* should create a forum for "non-traditional" scholarly works, such as poetry, narratives, photography, art, and videos. This section of the journal, called "Studio," celebrates creative pieces that speak to and challenge societal and educational inequities, be it through a powerful image, free verse poetry, video, or any other medium. We believe that by including alternative, creative works we are redefining scholarship and what is viewed as "worthy" knowledge.

This inaugural issue features "Deep Understandings and Thick Descriptions: Tackling Questions about Race" by Gertrude Tinker Sachs, Rachel Grant, and Shelley Wong. In this article, three professors of color respond to the continuation of White police killings of Black people in the United States. The authors contend that there is a strong need for everyone—professors and educators, in particular—to be proactive in confronting racism by *tackling*, not avoiding, difficult questions and conversations related to race. The authors propose that, through the classroom enactment of deep understandings and thick descriptions, we can encourage a critical humanitarian response to the challenges of not knowing the diverse "Other." The authors present real experiences from their teaching to illustrate activities that can engage students in this important dialogue.

In the second featured article, "The Disestablishment of African American Male Compliant Ambiguity: A Prison Pipeline Essay," Aaron J. Griffen and Isaac C. Carrier present their recommendations to combat the never-ending struggle of African American male invisibility. The authors discuss the conflicts that African American males encounter

each day as they navigate an invisible space that the authors refer to as *compliant ambiguity*.

Our featured essay is “My Mother’s Research/My Daughter’s Voice: A Twofold Tale,” written by Xiomara Ortega-Trinidad and Ruth Trinidad-Galván. This essay highlights the voices of both mother/researcher/teacher and daughter/student as they navigate life and experiences during academic field research in Latin America. The tale interweaves the narratives of a researcher/teacher, who is influenced by her motherly role, and a daughter/student, who experiences the displacement of traveling to a new country for her mother’s academic research. Mother and daughter write simultaneously and present a twofold tale of movement, education, and consciousness.

The Studio showcases a poem by Richard Meyer, “He Is A Poet,” as well as various photographs that represent in visual form the core of what this journal is about—the confrontation and challenge of systemic inequities that continue to plague society and our daily lives.

We end this first issue of *Intersections* with a book review of *Seeds of Freedom: Liberating Education in Guatemala* by Clark Taylor (2014) written by Magdalena Vasquez Dathe.

We are excited to see this “idea” now realized in print form, and we extend our immense gratitude to every individual who contributed to this work. We hope that you enjoy this issue, and we look forward to continuing to publish critical pieces that represent pedagogies, frameworks, and creative pieces that challenge systemic inequities while inspiring hope and pathways for transformation.

Author

Virginia Necochea is currently a Research Assistant Professor in the Teacher Education & Educational Leadership Program at the University of New Mexico. She is most interested in better understanding the racial structure, especially how it impacts the educational system. Dr. Necochea is also the proud director of a local nonprofit in the Valle de Atrisco community that focuses on the protection and preservation of traditions connected to land and water. She is raising four beautiful and powerful children – Maya, Quetzal, Tlalli, and Emilio Tlakael – who instill hope that transformation is possible.