

Editorial: All the F Words

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While compiling this volume and editing the articles, I realized all the authors are women. Though this was not an explicitly feminist call, it is interesting that in a field dominated by women, male voices often figure prominently in published journals. Thus, it is a welcome sign to have so many strong female voices in this volume of the *Journal of Social Theory in Art Education* devoted to All the F Words.

As I reflected on the articles in this volume, I noticed three themes that address the topics authors chose: identity, diversity, and explorations. The first three articles in this volume address identity. Through Kim Cosier's graphic article, we see a bit into her past and present through her explorations of fundamentalism and feminism. She delves into how her life has changed and unfolded due to interactions with family members, friends, and partners who approached fundamentalism and feminism differently. Amy Pfeiler-Wunder's piece relates to autoethnographic work she does on her own and with students. Through thinking about themselves as the teachers they are becoming, her students develop a deeper understanding of their own identity. Laura Hetrick's study with three pre-service teachers engages them in watching and analyzing clips from movies showing how teachers are depicted. Through this work, Hetrick analyzes three of the common fictions that pre-service teachers tell themselves about their future career.

The next thematic grouping is diversity with four articles in this set. Gloria Wilson explores fictive kinship as a potential means to help teachers connect with their students. Through interviews with three artist educators and a review of her own ex-

periences, she unpacks some of the demographic and equity problems in education. Claire Penketh explores fictions related to independence and interdependence through analyzing documents related to students with special needs in the UK. By challenging the notion that independence should be prized, she proposes ideas for how we might all work toward interdependence. Courtnie Wolfgang and Mindi Rhoades propose an approach to art education, fagnostics, that centers the experiences of students and teachers who are LGBTQ+ and actively acknowledges them, rather than assuming they are “other.” Pulling from their ongoing Big Gay Church performative work at NAEA conferences, they view education as a continual site of intervention and struggle. Jessica Kirker interrogates her own position within her school’s discourses about students of color. Through her journaling and reflections she studies her role within the school setting and questions if, when, and how she chooses to disrupt the dominant discourses surrounding race in her school.

The final grouping relates to explorations of different ways we may work and think moving toward the future. In Jodi Kushins’ #MobilePhotoNow article, she unpacks the way different factions in the art world operate. Through her portrait of this exhibition at the Columbus Museum of Art, she highlights a new and different way that factions in the art world might work together to challenge existing practice and hierarchy. Mindi Rhoades chose to simultaneously employ literal and metaphorical approaches to the theme of the journal. Through her visual piece of writing out all the f words in the dictionary and her written piece that addresses her personal connections to and explorations of words, Rhoades connects her life to “all the f words.”

While in graduate school, I had the fortune to learn alongside many people from different parts of the world. There were a number of women I came to know well from Taiwan and they exposed me to the concept of a “learning sister”¹ with *xué jiě* being a senior schoolmate and *xué mèi*² being a junior schoolmate. To be someone’s *xué jiě* or *xué mèi* implies that you went to the same school at the same time and

¹ The same concept exists for male students as well.

² The word *xué* translates to mean learning in English. *Jiě* is an older sister and *mèi* is a younger sister.

came to know each other. There is a connection and responsibility stronger than what is typical in the US context of education and a familial type of bond. For instance, among all the older students who may be one’s *xué jiě*, there may be a *zhí shǔ xué jiě*, a senior student who takes greater responsibility to help you. At the same time, you would also have a *zhí shǔ xué mèi*, a younger student that you look after more. In turn, she would also look after someone younger than her.

Though certainly not the same as the concept of fictive kinship that is the focus of Gloria Wilson’s article, it struck me that thinking of peers, colleagues, and students in different, more family-like terms might promote greater success in improving and humanizing education. If we overtly worked to create communities within our classrooms, schools, and institutions that fostered looking out for one another and having significant responsibility to others, we might be able to change the landscape of education. Having an overt responsibility to another person and being deeply invested in their success could promote the type of help and support that many new teachers say they are lacking. How might we be able to change our classrooms and learning environments if we embraced this notion?

Developing a strong relationship with a learning sister might be one way that educators can work together for progress. For instance, the type of trust that could be built would be helpful when educators have to acknowledge the fictions that we tell ourselves, society tells us, and our students believe. If we are to address the frictions and factions that exist in many institutions, we need a strong network and we need to help each other be successful. Embracing some type of familial relationship, be it fictive kinship or the learning sister approach, is something worth considering. These relationships might be formed with peers around our practice through professional learning communities or research and writing groups. If we can develop bonds with one another, holding each other accountable while being held accountable ourselves, we may find new ways to help each other develop and improve our practice.

Perhaps the reason for so many submissions from women is that we are fed up with the status quo, frustrated with the inequities in education, and ready to say “F U” to the next person who thinks we are not being nice or cute when we stand up for our students and ourselves. Perhaps working together in a “learning sister” type of relationship with our peers may help us advance the status of women within the field to ensure that women’s contributions—particularly women of color, women who are LGBTQ+, women

from around the world, women with disabilities, and all women who have historically been excluded—to the arts and education are well represented in the future of art education.

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