

**Unveiling reality & the emergence of consciousness:
Emancipatory possibilities of a grassroots journal**
Guest Introduction
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Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the submersion of consciousness; the latter strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality.

Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed

With an overwhelming number of publications now available in the field of education, one might wonder: Why is another journal necessary? What is often overlooked in such a question is the importance of intentionality. The majority of education journals today are deeply mired in hierarchical academic values and traditions that generally have little to do with unveiling the oppressive social and material conditions faced by oppressed students and their communities—conditions that have resulted from long histories of racialized exclusion and embedded structures of economic exploitation.

As such, a grassroots community based publication that uncompromisingly seeks to disrupt the culture of banking education, for example, is not only a significant gesture but also imperative, in these difficult times.

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Over the last decade, increasing instrumentalization of the curriculum and the neoconservative fondness for high stakes testing have unfortunately eroded further emancipatory possibilities in both schools and communities. Hence, a journal focused on grassroots educational knowledge and practice, which seeks to reinscribe the voices and participation of underrepresented communities, in collaboration with university intellectuals, represents indeed a new moment for critical praxis. This speaks to a pedagogical praxis where theory and practice must remain ever in alliance, if the oppressive tendencies of traditional educational reforms and pedagogical practices are to be named and a truthful unveiling of reality is to emerge. Moreover, it is only through the critical realization that education does not simply occur within formal classroom environments but is rooted foremost in lived experience, that both quotidian knowledge and indigenous wisdom of community struggles can be accessed in ways that can potentially lead us toward greater critical consciousness and effective forms of political intervention against institutional and societal forces that dehumanize and demean the humanity of working people and their children, everywhere.

Each day children and families in working class and racialized communities around the world continue to be plagued by the impact of educational neoliberal policies that have unmercifully shattered any social contract linked to past dreams of social equality and global human rights. Despite the startling gap that now exists between the rich and the poor, few emancipatory efforts seem possible, as people scramble mightily to just make ends meet. With fewer jobs available across societies, even for the well educated, the disastrous impact of the current neoliberal nightmare preys on the most vulnerable populations, rousing weariness and despair. It is in the face of such conditions that genuine grassroots efforts are so needed to speak back to power and to offer realistic and concrete possibilities for transforming schools and communities—possibilities that must be rooted in the authority of the daily experiences of teachers, students, parents, and communities, who struggle daily to survive, challenge, and reinvent the injustices they face in their world.

The potential power of this grassroots educational journal is the empirical space that it seeks to provide for people immersed in the commons to proclaim their own stories and to offer their own interpretations about educational life today, as well as offer solutions that are truly grounded in their lived histories and conditions. So often, theories of education surface more from abstracted analytical notions about schooling, than from sustained empirical connection to the current classroom settings that children, parents, and their teachers must navigate daily. In so doing, the journal provides a much-needed community space for social imagination, interrogation, and the rethinking of education. This signals an innovative space that can conceivably generate and result in new forms of critical thought and critical methodologies to support emancipatory educational research.

What is apparent in our work as critical educators today is that the emergence of consciousness, as advocated by Freire almost 50 years ago, can only result from efforts that genuinely integrate the regenerative power of critical praxis—reflection, dialogue, and action—in our communal efforts to unveil injustice and to call for a most just education. The evolution of consciousness, required for emancipatory political action and societal transformation, then, can only truly arise from a living pedagogy that

supports the collective participation of the most oppressed, in the making of new meaning and constructing new possibilities for emancipatory political life.

The establishment of this journal, then, is rooted in a critical foundation of education and society, one that considers central the participation of those who historically have been rendered invisible or deemed unworthy of voice. It is with the hope of bringing community and educators together, as part of an international movement for educational change, that this critical and scholarly endeavor is born. Moreover, the journal editors and contributors stand in integrity with Paulo Freire's pedagogy of love, where radical hope and faith in the people's ability to name their own truths remain at the heart of their emancipatory research visions and critical interventions for *the unveiling of reality and the emergence of a consciousness*—in their persistent struggles to co-create a more just and loving world.