

## **Editors' Introduction: The Courage to Write about Teaching**

### **Laura Cruz, *Editor (Acting)***

Associate Research Professor, Teaching & Learning Scholarship  
Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence  
Penn State

### **Chas Brua, *Associate Editor (Acting)***

Instructional Consultant/Associate Research Professor  
Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence  
Penn State

### **Jacob Kelley, *Assistant Editor (Acting)***

PhD Student  
Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology  
Auburn University

**Welcome to this special issue of *Transformative Dialogues: Teaching and Learning Journal*.**

### **News and Notes from the Editorial Office**

- The editorial team partnered with the KPU library to complete the transition of the journal to be fully accessible through the online system (OJS). All of the back issues of *Transformative Dialogues* are also available (and searchable) at the same site. You can now search for past, present, and future articles all in one place.
- We are pleased to debut a new look. Our assistant editor, Jacob Kelley, has updated the *Transformative Dialogues* formatting guidelines so that the articles published in this issue—and the issues after this—will have a bolder appearance. We hope that our authors will proudly feature the pages of their work in online repositories (e.g. ResearchGate) as well as part of their tenure and promotion dossiers.
- We wish all of our readers, reviewers, and authors a merry (and safe) holiday season. Our editorial office will remain open for inquiries during the regular schedule for our university, which includes an extended hiatus between December 21<sup>st</sup> and January 4<sup>th</sup>. You are welcome to submit reviews or manuscripts at any time through our online system.

## Editors' Introduction

In their contribution to this issue, Raffo, Brinthaupt, Fisher, and Gardner note that Parker J. Palmer's seminal text, *The Courage to Teach*, recently passed its twentieth anniversary and remains one of the most cited texts on the subject of teaching and learning in higher education. Decades later, Palmer's message about the process of realizing your authentic teaching self continues to deeply resonate, even when the context of higher education has become so radically altered with the onset of a global pandemic. This resilience may be due, at least in part, to one of the central tenets of Palmer's philosophy: His emphasis on what could be described as pedagogical humility, the belief that we should always be open to new ways of thinking, talking, and, yes, even writing about our practice.

Embracing the courage to teach, Palmer argues, is a discovery process. In the case of Rohani, Rohani, and Flaherty, the turning point in their reflection came when they placed themselves in the role of the students who were experiencing a flipped classroom for the first time. As the authors note in their conclusion, "the more we embrace the role of learner, the more confident we become in ourselves—and in our students." They are not our only authors to suggest that taking the student perspective can be transformative. Patson and Warren advocate for inquiry-guided learning not just as a means for motivating STEM broadly, but as a way to foster more inclusive classroom spaces, especially for those students who have been historically underserved by more long-standing, conventional approaches to teaching sciences.

To find your courage to teach is not intended to be a lonely journey, but one that includes many opportunities for collaboration and learning from one another. Kadi, MacCallum, Haddock, and Crockett discuss how they developed a new course in ecofeminism as a collaborative project shared by instructors, students, and community members. In working together, they note, "We are showing students, our future leaders, how to put an intangible value into tangible actions that support the strength and health of a community." Burns, Goldin, Gonzalez Biagi, and Lopes outline how multiple institutions embraced a large scale curricular change (using student portfolios for competency based assessment) and elaborates on a model for how multiple stakeholder groups can work together to bring such efforts to fruition. Raffo, Brinthaupt, Fisher and Gardner share a collaborative reflection process, written by three instructors undergoing the transition to on-line teaching at the same time—together. They conclude their journey of shared discovery with the startling insight that "online technique is what teachers use until the real online teacher arrives."

In that same spirit of collaboration, Palmer is not the only scholar to talk about courage. Paulo Friere described a "pedagogy of hope" that he believed rested on our ability to not let our teaching practice come to a standstill, but rather to have the humility to recognize our own limitations; embrace the imperfections of the human existence; and have the courage to keep trying to think about, talk about, and—in this case—write about teaching in a ways that pushes all of us forward. As Vincent notes (in his literature review articulated as spoken word poetry). "there is always more to chew on..."

We hope that this issue of *Transformative Dialogues* provides you with a sense of courage, community, and possibility.

## **Further Reading**

Freire, P. (1992). *Pedagogy of hope: Reliving pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.

Gannon, K. (2020). *Radical hope: A teaching manifesto*. West Virginia University Press.

Palmer, P. J. (2017). *The courage to teach guide for reflection and renewal*. John Wiley & Sons.