

The Dreamwork of Transformation in Teacher Education

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THIS SPECIAL ISSUE ENGAGES THE LIMITS of the stories we tell ourselves in teacher education through the idea/image/metaphor/vantage of dreams and dreaming. Ever since the publication of Freud's (1900) *Interpretation of Dreams*, the status of dreams and dreaming has persisted in inquiry as a means to resist—through practices of analysis, interpretation, and social critique—our most taken for granted understandings of ourselves and others. Freud (1914/2001) argued that dreams act as “the guardian of sleep” (p. 38), allowing us to become conversant with parts of ourselves that are difficult to know or accept. Pinar's (2004) reference to the contemporary landscape of educational reform as “the nightmare that is the present” inaugurates his book, *What is Curriculum Theory?* (p. 5). Ta-Nehisi Coates' (2015) elaboration of “The Dream,” in *Between the World and Me*, identifies national mythologies of race as structuring the persistence of white supremacy. Following in this tradition of scholarship on dreams, the writers in this special issue demonstrate that dreamwork—as understood through psychoanalysis, social theory, and curriculum studies—complicates the subjective and social dimensions of teacher education, expanding the sphere of teaching and our sense of the teacher as subject.

In this issue, we ask: What can we make of the various versions of dreaming if we use them to think anew about our work in the spaces of teacher education? A linear theory of learning predominates the structures and features of most teacher education programs. The focus typically resides in the terrain of explicit pedagogical exchange: unit and lesson plans about mandated curricular topics, ways of engaging students' interest in order to maximize academic achievement, cultural relevance of classroom spaces, teaching for social justice, and so on. Within the framework of linearity, teacher educators risk operating within a narrowed sense of the teacher-subject they are teaching, and at the same time, the students risk a narrowed sense of the teacher they are working to become.

The eight papers in this issue explore the limits of the linear and the literal in the dynamics of pedagogical exchange, asking: What versions of the dream, dreamers, and dreaming structure the scene of teacher education? What happens in teacher education when experience meets something other than our idealizations, expectations, and anticipated outcomes? The papers examine, in various ways, what occurs when dreams in teacher education meet the realities of curriculum and professional life. Whether the transformative desires of teacher educators and preservice teachers are structured by anti-racist, social justice, reconceptualist, or “basic-skills” outcomes, there is always another story being told. These “other” stories constitute the dreamwork of teacher education.

Dreamwork and teacher education have in common the capacity to bring students into contact with themselves and other people in transitional states of human subjectivity and learning. In this issue, attention to the dreamwork of teacher education offers insight into the ways in which professional knowledge and experience are shaped by social and psychical experiences of non-linearity, vulnerability, omnipotence, suffering, hope, and transformation. The scholars featured in this special issue have taken up the call in a variety of ways, working theoretically and speculatively with various concepts of dreaming and making use of various forms of dreamlike data (journals, autobiographies, art works, and other symbolic material) from teacher education classrooms, programs, and experiences to imagine dreamwork as a fundamental dimension of teacher education and its capacity for transformation.

References

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