

EDITORIAL

The *Journal Handbook of Research on Urban Mathematics Teaching and Learning*: A Resource Guide for the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015

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As a *critical*¹ mathematics educator, it is difficult not to be pessimistic about the [Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015](#) (ESSA), signed into law by President Barack Obama on December 10th. The ESSA, similar to its predecessors, has an admirably worded purpose statement: “To provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps” (ESSA, 2015, Sec. 1001). But after more than a decade of suffering through federal legislation that left far too many children behind and yielded far too many losers in the race to the top, I have become increasingly doubtful that any organization, including the federal government, has “the will” (Hilliard, 1991, p. 31)² to facilitate “the kind of violent reform necessary to change the conditions of African American, Latin@, Indigenous, and poor students [i.e., the collective Black³] in mathematics education” (Martin, 2015, p. 22). Nevertheless, it is being

¹ By *critical*, I mean in the critical theoretical sense. Bronner (2011), in providing a definition of sorts of critical theory, writes:

Critical theory refuses to identify freedom with any institutional arrangement or fixed system of thought. It questions the hidden assumptions and purposes of competing theories and existing forms of practice. . . . Critical theory insists that thought must respond to the new problems and the new possibilities for liberation that arise from changing historical circumstances. Interdisciplinary and uniquely experimental in character, deeply skeptical of tradition and all absolute claims, critical theory...[is] concerned not merely with how things [are] but how they might be and should be. (pp. 1–2)

² In his article titled “Do We Have the *Will* to Educate All Children?” Hilliard (1991) writes:

If our destination is excellence on a massive scale, not only must we change from the slow lane into the fast lane; we literally must change highways. Perhaps we need to abandon the highways altogether to take flight, because the highest goals that we can imagine are well within reach for those who have the *will to excellence*. (p. 36, emphasis in original)

³ Martin (2015), attributing the term to Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, named this group of currently and historically underserved students *the collective Black*.

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critical that makes me optimistic as well, albeit a “non-stupid optimism” (McWilliam, 2005, p. 1).⁴ It is this forever oscillating between pessimism and optimism that drives me and many other critical educators to do the work that we do.

For the past 8 years, exemplars of this crucially needed work—completed by a particular group of (largely) critical mathematics educators—are found within the online pages of the *Journal of Urban Mathematics Education (JUME)*. The readers, editors, reviewers, and authors of *JUME* (a collective group that numbers more than 1,000 strong) have brought to life over 1,700 pages of scholarly editorials, commentaries, response commentaries, public stories, research articles, and book reviews. This group of educators includes those who have spent decades working to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education (many with a specific focus on the collective Black), as well as those who are just beginning their careers as critical mathematics classroom teachers, teacher educators, and/or education researchers.

The purpose behind the creation of *JUME* was and continues to be to create a movement of change in mathematics education (Matthews, 2008). Over the past 8 years, *JUME* has offered different statements—that is, different knowledges (cf. Foucault, 1969/1972)—about “urban” mathematics education and, in turn, different statements about urban children and urban schools (Stinson, 2010). To date, web views of *JUME* content have exceeded 140,000 views, and [Google Scholar citations](#) have exceeded 400, with [Google](#) and [Google Scholar](#) web searches returning over 2,300 and 340 hits, respectively.

Four years ago, based on the power, in the Foucauldian sense (see, e.g., Foucault, 1980), of the academic edited handbook to produce and reproduce knowledge in both social science research, in general (e.g., Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2000, 2005, 2011), and mathematics education research, in particular (e.g., Grouws, 1992; Lester, 2007), I suggested that *JUME* be envisioned “as a both—and rather than an either—or research and pedagogical resource” (Stinson, 2011, p. 3). That is, *JUME* can function as both a peer-reviewed journal and an academic edited handbook on urban mathematics education. I then proceeded to provide the Table of Contents, if you will, of the first edition of the *Handbook of Research on Urban Mathematics Teaching and Learning*.

Here, I offer an expanded version of that Table of Contents, including the research and scholarship published in *JUME* over the past 4 years (see Appendix A).⁵

⁴ McWilliam (2005) argues that teachers who maintain their passion for teaching even after seeing endless rounds of ideas and policies come through do not indulge in mindless optimism but rather a non-stupid optimism.

⁵ See also two *JUME* special issues: the Benjamin Banneker Association and National Science Foundation (BBA-NSF) special issue (Bullock, Alexander, & Gholson, 2012) and the Privilege and Oppression in the Mathematics Preparation of Teacher Educators (PrOMPTE) special issue (Stinson & Spencer, 2013), as well as the editorials, public stories, and book reviews published in nearly every issue.

I also suggest here an expanded use for *JUME* beyond its use as a research and/or pedagogical resource. I suggest that *JUME* be used as an easily accessible resource guide to assist those mathematics education leaders and policy makers who will be busy in the coming months and years translating ESSA into policies and practices intended to ensure that every “urban student” succeeds in mathematics. This time around, however, I hope that members of the larger mathematics education community will neither allow politics to take the place of scientific inquiry (Boaler, 2008) nor erase “race” from a national conversation on mathematics teaching and learning (Martin, 2008), among other policy missteps and omissions of the past.⁶ As the single largest and most up-to-date collection of theoretical and empirical social science on urban mathematics teaching and learning, I hope those members of the mathematics education community who will be charged (both directly and indirectly) to translate ESSA will turn to *JUME* often as they consider Bullock’s (2015) most recent direct and timely question:

– “Do all lives matter in mathematics education?”

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⁶ For instance, although it is stated that the views expressed in *Foundations for Success: The Final Report of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel* [NMAP, 2008] “do not necessarily represent the positions and policies of the [U.S.] Department of Education” (p. ii), both the panel and the resulting report were commissioned under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The panel was charged “with the responsibilities of relying upon the ‘best available scientific evidence’ and recommending ways ‘... to foster greater knowledge of and improved performance in mathematics among American students’” (p. xiii). For critiques of the *Final Report*, see Kelly (2008) and Sriraman (2008).

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APPENDIX A

NOTE: Scroll over titles and click, all “chapters” are hyperlinked.

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(Expanded edition)

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