

## EDITORIAL

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# An Urban Mathematics Education Book Review?: Considerations for *JUME* Book Review Authors

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Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.

– Francis Bacon, 1625

Reading books can be an enriching experience. There are a growing number of books devoted to many topics in the urban mathematics education domain and beyond. As an intellectual enterprise, *urban* mathematics education borrows from many intellectual traditions. Therefore, it is critically important for urban mathematics education that researchers and scholars who have chosen to work in this domain read across genres, disciplines, and traditions. Such cross-disciplinary reading exponentially grows the number of books that have potential to influence the field. The aforementioned Francis Bacon epigraph suggests that books often fall into three categories for readers. My remarks here are for those who seek to “chew and digest” books that speak, both directly and somewhat indirectly, to urban mathematics education. In this editorial, I highlight some important points for potential book review authors to consider when submitting a manuscript to *JUME*.

First and foremost, authors must pay attention to urban mathematics education. I encourage book review authors to read Tate (2008) to consider the importance of positioning urban in mathematics education scholarship, in particular, and Milner (2012) to consider evolving conceptualizations of urban education, in general. Of course, book review authors should consider the customary elements associated with a book review such as understanding the context (i.e., cultural, historical, political, racial, social, and so on) from which the book was written, highlighting special features of the book, and providing an overview of its possible contributions to the field, to name a few. My point here is for authors to consider the frontiers of urban scholarship when outlining, brainstorming, and drafting a *JUME* book review.

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Second, authors should personalize, contextualize, and problematize their identities, experiences, and ideologies with respect to the text. It might be appropriate for authors to do this in the beginning of the book review to “hook” or “grab” the reader’s attention, in the middle when justifying what might be important or lacking in the book, or near the end to link the arguments put forth in the book to their own experiences. The urban domain encompasses many facets; understanding the worldview(s) of the writer of the book review in conjunction with the text helps to shed light on the salient features that the text might provide urban mathematics education research, teaching, and learning. For example, in my *JUME* book review of Danny Martin’s (2009) edited volume *Mathematics Teaching, Learning, and Liberation in the Lives of Black Children* (see Jett, 2009), I shared my epistemological and pedagogical stances as an African American male scholar and researcher. I used my positionality as a means to connect with those who I thought would benefit from the book. I encourage *JUME* book review authors, too, to reflect and to recognize where they stand in regards to issues raised in the text.

Lastly, authors should be willing to critique the text as the pages of *JUME* are intended to push the boundaries of canonical scholarship while illuminating urban excellence (Matthews, 2008). Being critical is essential, and engaging in the iterative process of critical thinking should urge authors “to think long, hard, and critically; to unpack; to move beyond the surface; to work for knowledge” (hooks, 2010, pp. 9–10). I challenge authors to think critically about the messages the book sends to, for, and about urban students, teachers, parents, communities, and ultimately, to the disciplinary field of urban mathematics education. Therefore, be sure to critically evaluate the book and its associated merits (and lack thereof), especially through an urban mathematics education lens.

As the *JUME* book review editor, I invite potential authors to submit manuscripts that advance the intellectual enterprise called urban mathematics education. We, the *JUME* Editorial Team, especially wish for the book review section to be a space for graduate students and early career scholars to grapple with the possibilities, challenges, and opportunities that might arise from reading and engaging with a particular text. As previously noted, there has been exponential growth in published books that have the potential to positively influence how the larger mathematics community thinks about urban research and scholarship and urban teaching and learning. A book review is a great way to introduce the larger community to different ideas. In closing, I leave potential authors with one final consideration. Adler and Van Doren (1972/2014) contend: “Every book has a skeleton hidden between its covers. Your job as an analytical reader is to find it” (p. 75). In keeping with the sentiments of that statement, I challenge book review authors to find those urban mathematics education skeletons and bring them to the fore in their book reviews in critical and unique ways.

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