

Editor Introduction to the Special Issue

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Part II of this two partⁱ guest edited special issue is focused on postfoundational theories and research in early childhood education and critical childhood policy studies: Research by New and Emerging Scholars. Part II is guest edited by Meredith Whye and Xue Yin. The authors in Part II were selected because they were early career scholars (at the end of their Ph.D. dissertations or within 2-3 years of receiving their doctoral degree) *and* were using postfoundational theories and methodologies in critical childhood policy studies work. With the first issue with eight articles published in December 2024, we are thrilled to publish the second issue with seven articles.

The authors in Part II have done their research in China and the USA (Qi), Denmark (MacCrimmon), Germany (Macha & Claßen), Indonesia (Pase), Ireland (Smythe), and the USA (Alexander, Umezawa.) Their topics (in brief) focus on the construction of professionalism (Qi), language policy and new immigrant settlements (Umezawa), literacy-a diffractive analysis (Alexander), family child care (MacCrimmon), children's participation in defining quality (Macha & Claßen), non-intervention and personhood (Pase), and racialized boundaries and black futurity in Ireland (Smythe.) See the introduction by Whye and Yin for greater detail.

In addition to focusing on postfoundational theories and methodologies, these articles are examples of critical childhood policy analysis. In tribute to the founding editor of the journal of *International Critical Childhood Policy Studies*, Gaile Sloane Cannella, I highlight how Cannella, Brown and Lincoln describe elements of critical qualitative policy analysis, as well as the ethical and political responsibilities we take on in doing these projects. Given the urgent need for critique as well as resistance and action at this particular time in the name of social justice and equity, it seems important to illustrate the diverse ways critical qualitative inquiry can be done, drawing on different theories, but with different important questions and policies emerging.

In a special issue of *Qualitative Inquiry*, Cannella, et al. (2023) state the broad goal of the issue is:

To demonstrate how critical qualitative inquiry (CQI) can facilitate the performance of justice-oriented public policy by conceptualizing movement beyond the logic of policy as prescription. CQI can acknowledge and address power and hegemony within societies, along with the ways these power orientations are played out/challenged/countered by/through policy decisions and practices... (In addition) critical health policy researcher Carol Bacchi (2016) (focuses on) how problems themselves are constituted, asking questions related to how the problem is conceptualized and how meaning is represented. Critical work problematizes the territory of the "real," asking questions like the following: How does the policy itself contain within it an implicit construction (and therefore representation) of the problem? From this poststructural perspective, one starts by analyzing the proposed solution for how the problem has been invented. (Cannella, Brown & Lincoln, 2023)

In addition, Michael Apple highlights the important role of the critical scholar/activist in these times.

In *Can Education Change Society?* I detail the tasks of the critical scholar/activist (Apple, 2013.) Among them are, first, “bearing witness to negativity”—that is, telling the truth about what is actually happening in education and its relationship to those relations of exploitation, domination, and subordination in the larger society and to actions in education and elsewhere against such relations. But this is not all. Second, we need to analyze current realities for sites of possibilities, for places where more critically democratic structures can be opened. (Apple, 2024).

Each of the articles in this two-part special issue speaks to ways in which injustices and inequities are occurring. Authors also illustrate or speak to ways in which things might be different focusing on more just/equitable ideological frameworks, processes, just and equitable outcomes, and new possibilities. They draw on new theories and methodologies as they explore diverse but crucially important topics. Finally, with awareness of the difficult times we and so many others live in, I want to thank all the authors for allowing the *International Critical Childhood Policy Studies* journal to publish their important work. In addition, congratulations to the special issue guest editors Meredith Whye and Xue Yin on the completion of the publication of Part I and II of this highly relevant guest edited issue.

References

- Apple, M. W. (2024). Critical policy analysis: Gains and challenges. Vol. 46(2). *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. <https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737241240434>
- Cannella, G. S., Brown, C.P., and Lincoln, Y.S. (2023). Critical qualitative inquiry as an avenue for critical public policy knowledge and change. *Qualitative Inquiry*. Vol. 30(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004231163162>

ⁱ For Part I of this special issue, co-edited by Xue Yin and Meredith Whye, published in December, 2024, see <https://journals.sfu.ca/iccps/index.php/childhoods/issue/view/31>
International Critical Childhood Policy Studies journal, (2025) Vol. 12(1), i-ii ii