

A CRITICAL HISTORICAL RE-THINKING OF ONLINE LEARNING IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19: THE UNEVENNESS OF PANDEMICS & THE NEED FOR A *PHYSICAL PLACE* CALLED SCHOOL

ELWB 2021 Conference

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Background

- ✓ Conversations with NYS educational leaders (2010)
- ✓ Student income disparities, housing, & school technology
- ✓ Novice & veteran; white women & men; varied contexts (e.g., rural, urban, suburban; median household income & economic development)
- ✓ Despite differences in context, conversation commonalities included:
 1. socioeconomics drove demographic shifts, increased poverty, & family displacement
 2. aside from the *custodial function & responsibility of schools*, would there be a need for a *physical place called school in the future* or would we see teachers replaced with online education *en masse*?

Bringing the Past into Conversation with the Present

- ✓ Critical historical thinking (CHT) (Salinas et al., 2012)
- ✓ Re-think, re-interrogate, & re-interpret past so to challenge official narratives (Apple, 2000; Banks, 1993; Darder et al., 2003; Lemke, 2015)
- ✓ Not using the voices of the marginalized within this reinterpretation & thus this remains a white & privileged knowledge reconstruction
- ✓ Still, CHT permits critique of taken-for-granted ideologies embedded within leader thinking, which can maintain educational inequities, & in particular, those created by market-driven reforms (Griffen, 2007; Lemke & Zhu, 2018; Lipman, 2011; Scott, 2005)
- ✓ Online learning under COVID-19 is part such marketization, & it must be troubled

The Unevenness of a Pandemic

- ✓ As seen in other global pandemics, COVID-19 exacerbated existent systemic & structural racial, economic, gender, & health disparities (Brogan, 2020; Chemaly, 2020; Doshi et al., 2020; 2020; Goldstein et al., 2020; Jordan, 2020; Kendi, 2020)
- ✓ 45th President (& congressional allies) downplayed the seriousness of the pandemic (Qiu et al., 2020) & racialized it in a way that led to more exclusionary, racist, & nativist thinking (Hong, 2020)
- ✓ US CDC recommended school closures follow available science, international reporting guidelines (e.g., WHO), & school health experts

Pandemic Educational Inequities

- ✓ Limited science-based guidance led states & districts to varied school closure & reopening plans (Weingarten, 2020)
- ✓ Early concerns over unintended closure effects (e.g., food insecurity, mental health, technology gaps) (Rasberry, 2020)
- ✓ Increased equity concerns: Ranged from food delivery & child abuse while quarantining with perpetrators to communication with families, digital divides, & increased online commercial exploitation, bullying, & privacy issues (Chan & Taylor, 2020; Gaudiano, 2020; Hill 2020; Kamenetz, 2020; Solon, 2020; Strauss, 2020; Will, 2020)

Bringing the Past & Present into Conversation with the Future

- ✓ Pandemic conditions speak to problems unforeseen by those who advocated for what was, *beyond the physical school as a place of learning*
- ✓ Pandemic speaks to the unequivocal importance of the, *custodial*, or caring, and *physical building* function of public schools in the everyday life worlds of students, educators, & the wider democratic commons
- ✓ Inequities demonstrate that online learning is not a panacea
- ✓ A. I. is not a replacement for the physical building (*of the past*), which makes possible in-person synergies & accountability (*of the present*), which support a communal democratic spirit (*of the future*)

Actions for the Field

- ✓ Investment in public school students, educators, facilities, & wider community infrastructure
- ✓ Money + radical re-thinking & agitating around material & temporal conditions:
 1. National agenda focused on whole-child-youth-young adult, ecological model of learning that through asset-mapping & multisector partnerships, accounts for the totality of public health & well-being
 2. Updates to unsafe & unhealthy learning conditions
 3. Alignment between public school salaries & professional dignity
 4. Increasing the number of nurses, psychologists, & social workers in public schools

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