



From the Editors

This themed issue, *Being Black in the United States*, addresses an important topic for adult education in the United States and globally. The topic has remained particularly glaring in the current cultural-historical context of increasing white nationalism and growing reminders through media, educational and societal events that the lives and bodies of so many Black people have not been valued. Historically, Black Americans have fought for the right to literacy and education from the time of slavery, and this fight continues today with unequal access, resources, and participation at all levels of education. Indeed, the fight for justice for Black Americans cannot be separated from their right to education; they are interwoven. But engaging in this fight also raises the question: What does this mean for US based Black adult educators that live and work in an environment of heightened White supremacy and anti-Black racism? How might our field continue to spotlight their lived experiences and perspectives on the way forward at this moment?

We issued an open call for proposals to make sure that we were inclusive of different voices, stories, and perspectives among Black folks in the field. There was significant interest; subsequently, responses to the call translated into two issues around this topic. A second issue is to be published later this fall. We want to thank the authors for their perseverance during pandemic uncertainties and for being so generous with their scholarship, time, and efforts.

This issue focuses on the experiences of Black folks in the US and the implications for different aspects of adult education – theory building, culturally responsive practices, activism, and future scholarship. Dominant themes showcase a call to action as well as Black folks’ indomitable human spirit, resilience, and hope in a variety of educational contexts. The majority of the manuscripts center the Black Experience; we have also included a few manuscripts focusing on social justice and adult education in general. The research articles and reflections, in particular, provide an examination of anti-Black racism in higher education. While all the articles address the discrimination, invisibility and injustice meted out to Black and Brown individuals, empirical pieces probe meaningful strategies for combatting the challenges. Jones for example, proposes aids that can support authentic reflection of administrative programs within higher education. Salcedo and Bohonos outline ways in which counter storytelling might influence more visible anti-racist practice in HRD fields. In their respective manuscripts highlighting the issues that face adult learners in K12 and in Adult Basic Education, Sandifer et al. and Pickard respectively propose “culturally responsive andragogy” and the acknowledgment of community cultural wealth as ways to intentionally improve preparation of and services to adult learners. Brion uses autoethnography to analyze their experience with poverty and its intersections as varied members of the African diaspora experience it. We are confident readers will benefit from a wealth of voices on issues that form the experience/s of Being Black in the United States, while gleaning insights on ways we can continue to move forward in the field.

As editors, we are particularly excited about the creative variety of writing pieces in this volume, ranging from theoretical conceptualizations and critical, reflective counter-narratives to analysis through photography and images; all encapsulate our theme in compelling ways. We are also proud to facilitate the work of several graduate student scholars. This issue was a group effort, and we pause to share our sincere thanks. To the authors – thank you for contributing your work, for your willingness to work on revisions, and for your patience while we readied this issue for publication. To the editorial team headed by **Dr. Lisa Merriweather** of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the outgoing Senior Editor, **Dr. Joni Schwartz** of the City University of New York - LaGuardia, the Senior Editor, and **Dr. Rodney Maiden** of Troy University, our outgoing Reflections Editor – thank you for such steadfast support. A special thanks to you, Joni, for your help! To our copyeditor, Bryndle L. Bottoms, for editing work and communication with authors – we are grateful; congratulations on graduating! We are grateful to Guy Delahoussaye and Hannah Holliman, doctoral students

from the University of Memphis, for their efforts on finalizing the manuscripts. Finally, thank you to the incoming editorial team, **Dr. Corinne Brion** (University of Dayton), **Dr. John Chaney** (LaGuardia Community College), and **Dr. Colleen Eren** (William Paterson University), for engaging in the final process of getting manuscripts ready for publication.

Going forward, DSJ is still compiling articles for a special issue on Critical Race Theory anticipated in 2023. Manuscripts on other topics related to social justice and adult education are always welcome.

Since the publication of its first volume in 2016, DSJ has published writing from international and national scholars at the intersection of social justice and adult education. With attacks on Critical Race Theory, the free press in America, and arguably a series of constitutional crises imminent, an academic journal such as DSJ is crucial to our academic and civil discourse. We are always looking for reviewers as well as contributors with passion, expertise, and experience who care about adult education from this perspective. Please contact dsjadulteducation@gmail.com, should you have interest in being a part of our team.

Edith Gnanadass, University of Memphis & Kayon Murray-Johnson, University of Rhode Island



Edith Gnanadass is an assistant professor of Higher and Adult Education at the University of Memphis. Using Critical Race Theory as an intervention into postcolonial feminist theory, she is a qualitative researcher whose interests are at the intersection of race, racialization, and learning focusing currently on the racialized pandemic and the racialized experiences of South Asian Americans. She is the co-editor of *Adult Education Quarterly*.



Kayon Murray-Johnson is an assistant professor whose scholarship interests surround critical dialogues on race and racism, faculty development and culturally responsive teaching approaches; a portion of her research earned the Christine A. Stanley diversity and inclusion research award from the POD network (North America's leading faculty development organization). Dr. Murray-Johnson has served on several editorial boards in the field, and she currently teaches in the adult education program at the University of Rhode Island..