Disrupting Epistemic Injustice in Education Research through Digital Platforms and Public Scholarship

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Abstract

Traditional education scholarship has historically excluded or silenced knowledges from disenfranchised communities that are deeply impacted by education research, policy, and practice, contributing to the epistemic injustice they experience. In this article we argue that research-intensive public universities should be committed to addressing epistemic injustice in education research by using digital platforms, such as fully open-access online journals for public scholarship on education, that uplift and center voices that are typically excluded from education research and discourse. We outline three principles of epistemically just practices by which a fully open-access online journals should be organized in order to promote educational equity informed by diverse contributors.

Keywords: education research, epistemic injustice, educational equity, public scholarship, digital platforms

Education research and scholarship has typically been confined to traditional academic journals or research organizations with particular policy agendas (Scott & Jabbar, 2014) both of which largely exclude the expertise of students, educators, and community members who are most often the subjects of research. We use "traditional" to point to scholars and systems of dominant knowledge production which silence and marginalize particular groups of people. Researchers within universities or research organizations are positioned as *the* experts on education, which has led to harmful beliefs, policies, practices, and other injustices within education.

Publishers of education research have exacerbated these injustices. Through their role as gatekeepers, they are able to define what counts as legitimate knowledge, and then restrict who can create and publish, and who can access, this knowledge. This creates unjust conditions for creating, distributing, and accessing knowledge, or epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007). Working toward educational justice requires destabilizing and resisting epistemic injustice through expansive views of what counts as legitimate knowledge as well as who gets to participate in the creation and exchange of knowledge. Education research must build knowledge that centers the experiences and expertise of the people most impacted by education policy and practice through elevating and bringing previously silenced voices into dialogue with traditional educational researchers (Brewer, Heilig, Gunderson, & Brown, 2018).

In this article, we first draw on the concept of epistemic injustice to describe how traditional education scholarship creates and maintains hierarchical, one-way power relationships between

the subjects and objects of educational research. We then describe the communicative conditions that can create more reciprocal relationships between academia and the public and support a more just model of educational scholarship, and finally, we discuss how digital platforms afford new ways for *The Assembly*: *A Journal for Public Scholarship on Education,* a graduate student led, open-access journal, to build reciprocal relationships that resist epistemic injustice.

Epistemic Injustice in Traditional Education Scholarship

Epistemic injustice refers to the ways those in positions of power control knowledge production through excluding knowledges of people without dominant social capital (Fricker, 2007; Dotson, 2011). Epistemic injustice occurs in systems in which "hearers" often do not find the knowledges of disenfranchised peoples credible, focusing instead on the expertise of those who have dominated knowledge production and dissemination opportunities. Fricker (2007), identifies two kinds of epistemic injustice that inflict distinct harm on the knower, testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. Testimonial injustice occurs when a speaker is denied credibility due to the prejudices of the hearer. Hermeneutical injustice occurs on a structural level and arises when one is impeded in understanding their own experiences due to a "gap in collective understanding" (Fricker, 2008, p. 69).

Mason (2011) argued that disenfranchised groups understand their experiences with injustice, but are often silenced because dominant discourses have not adopted language and knowledge that names and centers these injustices. Because of the dominant discourse and collective gaps in understanding, their experiences are often dismissed or denied by the dominant group. People in the dominant group promote dominant discourse which keeps the experiences of disenfranchised peoples in the margins or out of the discourse altogether. The purposeful, calculated ignorance evident in collective gaps in understanding make it difficult for disenfranchised groups to have their experiences seen as valid by the dominant group. Traditional scholars who are part of the dominant social group have historically contributed to these gaps in collective understanding by promoting false information, and silencing or ignoring the experiences of marginalized groups. Hermeneutical injustice often benefits traditional scholars, whose biases remain unchecked due to these gaps in collective understanding and a cycle of both testimonial and hermeneutical injustice continues.

Education scholarship is not exempt from unjust epistemic practices. Educational research, like most traditional scholarship, confines knowledge production and dissemination primarily to university-based researchers or think-tanks focused on promoting particular kinds of knowledge to influence education policy and practice (Pohlhaus, 2017). Traditional scholarship and, more recently, research conducted and produced by independent think-tanks maintain practices and structures that exclude the voices of the people being researched, often misrepresenting these groups of people and contributing to the oppression they experience in society (Welton, 1998).

Education Research and Epistemic Injustice

Education research, even critical education research, remains largely one-sided in research universities and private think-tanks, often funded by foundations with particular political goals and perspectives, maintaining education researchers' positions as "experts" in education policy and practice (Vasquez Heilig, Brewer, & Adamson, F., in press). University tenure guidelines contribute to this one-sidedness because researchers within universities receive promotions and tenure based largely on publications in what are considered top-tier scholarly journals (Bartha & Burgett,

2015). Many of these journals are inaccessible to broad audiences because of expensive paywalls and restricted use of academic libraries. There are a growing number of peer-reviewed, open-access education research journals, such as this publication and *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, which eases the difficulty of accessing education research, but authors' use of particular kinds of academic language and highly technical methodologies prevent understanding for readers not immersed regularly in academic language (Mazenod, 2018; van Schaik, Volman, Admiraal, & Schenke, 2018).

We do not mean to suggest there is no place for the use of academic language in education research. For instance, we are writing this article for a journal with an audience that is largely within academia. Vocabulary and writing styles that can be impenetrable to one audience aids in understanding for another. We use specific kinds of academic language in much of our work depending on the audiences to whom we are writing. Education research, however, should expand to include research that is understandable and accessible to broader audiences, and this research should not harm professional trajectories of university-based researchers or bar participation from those outside traditional research institutions.

University-based education scholarship is also based in a tradition of a particular type of elitism that even excludes the knowledges of diverse scholars who have been educated in such institutions. University settings place greater value on certain forms of cultural capital, namely White, middle-class, male cultural capital, not only limiting access for students of color, in particular, but devaluing the cultural capital students of color bring to higher education (Matias, 2016). By extension, faculty of color are also underrepresented in all institutions of higher education (Espino, 2014). The National Center for Education Statistics (2018) reported that 76% of "all full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions" were White (p. 185). When research-intensive universities are producing the knowledge often used in teacher education programs and other areas of education, this disparity in representation of faculty has grave consequences particularly for communities of color and low-income communities (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015).

University-based education research provides much of the knowledge within teacher education programs, but education research that informs policy on a large scale is happening more and more through research organizations and think-tanks in the United States. Private interests have long influenced public policy, but in education, venture philanthropists have been able to influence the direction of education policy through funding of research organizations outside of university settings that focus on particular private interests (Lubienski, Brewer, & La Londe, 2016). Unlike university-based education research, which does not consistently influence education policy at the same speed and frequency, independent and private research organizations are able, through the vast resources of venture philanthropists, to produce and disseminate knowledge in ways that are attractive to policy-makers (Vasquez Heilig et al., in press). These research organizations often provide what appear to be fast, concrete solutions to the problems in education (Kumashiro, 2012), but more often benefit private interests over student needs. Like so much university-based research on education, research organizations with the influence and resources to drive education policy is also the result of unjust epistemological practices. The solutions for education that the most influential research organizations are providing currently appear in the form of increased accountability measures through standardized and privatization via charter schools and voucher programs (Saltman, 2014). These reforms, far from increasing educational equity as reformers claim, actually work to increase segregation and weaken neighborhood schools for the most disadvantaged (Rotberg, 2014; Vasquez Heilig & Holme, 2013).

Harmful Narratives in Education Research

Education research has historically failed to uplift and center voices of disenfranchised students and communities. In fact, education research regularly ignores relationships of power within education spaces, in part, because so many researchers do not value the knowledge of students, teachers, and community members who are disenfranchised within education (Gonzales, 2015). Because the majority of education researchers come from White, middle-class backgrounds, education research most often centers White, middle-class values, values that erase other identities, values, and cultures (Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). Culturally and linguistically diverse students, low-income students, and queer students experience the devaluation of their identities, cultures, and languages in educational spaces as a result (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015).

Because of the unchecked biases, prejudices, and unacknowledged positionality of many education researchers (Hartsock, 1990), much of the knowledge that has been produced in dominant research communities have reinforced and contributed to deficit perspectives. For instance, these biases have resulted in assumptions about deficits of language and intellectual deficiencies (McKay & Devlin, 2016), particularly of students of color from low-income households (Matias, 2016; Zirkel & Johnson, 2016), and placing the blame for systemic injustice on the shoulders of people experiencing the injustice (Flores, 2018; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). It is not only challenging for disenfranchised communities to contribute to education research, but the exclusionary practices of academia also make it difficult to refute the harmful narratives that do exist. Many scholars in traditional research communities have done important work to counter these narratives in order to impact lasting equitable policies and practices in education (Kumashiro, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Solórzano, 2001; Tikly, 2016), and their work has paved the way for the justice-focused public scholarship we wish to publish in *The Assembly* using digital platforms. There are other student-led open access journals, such as *The Harvard Educational Review and The Texas Education Review,* which have contributed greatly to both access to education research and the production of knowledge within education research. We seek to further the work of public scholarship with the primary focus of justice in education.

While traditional research has contributed to the harmful biases that we discussed previously, much of the research conducted at universities about education policies and practices fails to connect with practicing educators in classrooms (Penuel et al., 2017). Traditional education research has fostered a divide between education researchers and educators, in part, because so few educators' voices and expertise are directly represented in the research (Zeichner, Payne, & Brayko, 2015). Educators often feel that traditional education research is disconnected from the day to day realities of education practice (Penuel et al., 2017). Additionally, traditional education research, particularly in the current reform climate, devalues the professionalism and knowledge of teachers by insisting on standardized curriculum focused on improving testing outcomes (Brown, Vaquez Heilig, & Brown, 2013). It is unsurprising that educators feel devalued when much education research fails to represent teachers' expertise and to provide knowledge that feels beneficial to their practice (Santoro, 2018). Though educators spend a great deal more time with students than education researchers, educators' knowledge is not viewed as legitimate in education research and in policy reform, which is evident by the dissatisfaction teachers have been expressing in strikes across the country (Horn, 2017; Turner, Lombardo, & Logan, 2018).

Because of these realities, education research often represents a closed loop of knowledge production and consumption, produced by and for particular academic audiences. Whether in universities or private research organizations, education researchers have largely represented the interests of White, middle-class and affluent people (Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Dumas, 2016).

Traditional scholars speak to and learn from other scholars with similar backgrounds. At universities, students disproportionately also belong to the dominant social group (McFarland et al., 2018), making it difficult to diversify higher education in order to disrupt unjust epistemic practices. Current structures of education scholarship provide few opportunities to recognize bias and collective gaps in understanding that lead to the continued oppression of disenfranchised communities and inequitable education practices.

Some education research is disrupting epistemic injustice through fields and methodologies such as critical race (Lynn & Dixson, 2013) and feminist theories (Kane & Mertz, 2012), participatory action research (PAR) and youth participatory action research (YPAR) (Cammarota & Fine, 2008), research-practice partnerships (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013), and community-based research (Guillen & Zeichner, 2018). These researchers push the boundaries of education research by including more diverse voices in their studies and by focusing on power structures that lead to inequity rather than focusing on the perceived deficits of marginalized students and communities. This work inspires us to push those boundaries even further through public scholarship using digital platforms.

Public Scholarship in Education

Increasingly, researchers are using social media platforms like Twitter to disseminate education research and much of the research is critical and focused on educational equity (Mirra, 2018; Veletsianos, 2012). Such platforms are accessible to a much wider audience than scholarly journals, which begins to address the epistemic injustice of limited access to knowledge (Alperin et al., 2018; Veletsianos, 2012). These scholars also resist using academic jargon in their public scholarship in order to engage with audiences that do not regularly encounter what is often confusing and opaque forms of written language. Some universities are beginning to recognize public scholarship as a valuable avenue for publishing research (Bartha & Burgett, 2015), which is encouraging, but public scholarship focused mainly on increasing accessibility to knowledge still maintains a one-way knowledge production model.

Researchers that are attempting to bridge academia and the public may be limited to dissemination work where academics share their own research with the public (Cantor & Lavine, 2006). Public scholars are also publishing blogs, op-ed columns, and other social media platforms to disseminate work, network with other scholars, and engage in a more public conversation about their work. Their efforts are an important step, particularly if these scholars approach education research critically, and tend to increase access to knowledge consumption, but not necessarily knowledge production. Public scholars with unchecked biases still contribute to one-way systems which often still exploit, silence, and exclude the knowledges of the communities that are being researched (Dotson, 2014), and do so to a much larger audience. In order for public education scholarship to promote educational equity, public scholarship must critically engage with and resist educational policies and practices that deny equity to all students.

Justice-Focused Public Scholarship on Education

The Center for Community and Civic Engagement defines public scholarship as "diverse modes of creating knowledge for and with publics and communities" (Nierobisz, Richey, & Walker, 2018, para. 2). Public scholarship, and its increased recognition in research-intensive spaces is encouraging, particularly in terms of greater access to knowledge. However, in order to acknowledge and address unjust epistemic practices that maintain one-way knowledge production,

public scholarship must also expand knowledge production by including and acknowledging the expertise and credibility of the knowledge of communities previously excluded from education scholarship. Public scholarship must work towards justice and the social good (Pickup & Kuntz, 2017) through examining relationships of power and oppression and working to uplift disenfranchised communities and their knowledges.

In order for epistemic injustice to be addressed and repaired, traditional scholars have to first acknowledge their contribution to epistemic violence, or the "refusal, intentional or unintentional, of an audience to communicatively reciprocate a linguistic exchange owing to pernicious ignorance" (Dotson, 2011, p. 238). Traditional scholars, either by failing to acknowledge their own positionalities and biases or actively promoting knowledge that is harmful to disenfranchised communities, have created scholarly audiences that are often unwilling to hear the knowledge of people within those communities. Acknowledging one's own biases and positionality is not enough however. Traditional scholars also need to step away from the microphone, so to speak, and give space for disenfranchised peoples to produce and disseminate their knowledge. Traditional scholars need to promote and uplift the knowledges of a diverse groups of people who have experienced injustice (Pohlhaus, 2017).

Traditional scholars have additional resources and power from their universities and other research organizations. These scholars can and should leverage their power in those institutions to promote justice-focused public scholarship. This is scholarship that promotes "communicative reciprocal relationships" (Dotson, 2011, p. 240), or knowledge that is produced and shared by diverse groups of people within traditional research spaces and also beyond those spaces. Justice-focused public scholarship is one way in which epistemic injustice can be addressed and begin to be repaired for the communities who have been victimized by one-way, biased research practices. Justice-focused public scholarship redefines whose stories get told and who tells those stories. Making education research available on public platforms such as social media or paywall-free websites is only one initial step. Public scholarship must *be* public by giving disenfranchised peoples "a voice at the epistemic table" (Medina, 2011, p. 11).

As doctoral students in a research-intensive public university, we recognize our positionality within traditional scholarship. Rather than denying or ignoring institutional power, we believe it is important to leverage resources at the university to begin to address epistemic injustice by founding an online, open-access journal of public scholarship on education. The goal of *The Assembly* is to disrupt the systems of power that restrict knowledge production and dissemination that silence and marginalize particular groups of people (Fricker, 2007). Through an online, open-access journal, we aim to redefine education scholarship by seeking out and elevating the expertise of students, teachers, and community members who have deep knowledge of the educational issues in their unique contexts. We are leveraging online platforms to build communicatively reciprocal relationships among an assembly of communities (Dotson, 2011). These reciprocal relationships not only require speakers to have the opportunity to be heard, but to have their meaning understood and become part of a communicative exchange of knowledge (Dotson, 2011).

In order to accomplish the goal of addressing epistemic injustice through digital platforms and justice-focused public scholarship for education, we argue these efforts should be guided by three organizing principles of epistemically just practices:

1. Education research must open up space for all groups to speak, in their own voices, about their own experiences so that their knowledges become part of the collective social understanding.

2. Education research must be accessible and comprehensible to those who are most directly impacted by the research so that collective understandings can include discourse that names injustices, validating the social and educational experiences of marginalized groups.

3. Education research must engage in full reciprocal dialogue with those who are most directly impacted by research.

In the following sections, we will first describe each of these organizing principles in more detail, and then provide examples from *The Assembly: A Journal for Public Scholarship on Education* on how digital platforms afford opportunities to enact these principles. We do not provide these in order to dictate how other organizations should enact these principles, but merely as instructive examples. We expect that even these examples will be modified, abandoned, refined and reformed over time as we build understandings of epistemic justice within changing technologies and social contexts.

Organizing Principle: All Groups Speak in their own Voices

The first organizing principle is to elevate the voices of those who are most impacted by educational research by creating space for previously silenced groups to speak for themselves and in their own voices. Even in methodologies that aim to center marginalized voices, such as PAR and YPAR, the reporting is still often done by the researcher. The events and experiences are filtered through the researcher first. As a research community, we are conditioned to accept knowledge as credible and include it in collective social knowledge only when it has first been processed and reported by another researcher. In the inaugural issue of *The Assembly*, two of the seven articles were written by practicing classroom teachers, teachers whose direct knowledge of issues in education is often devalued in education research (Leat, Reid, & Lofthouse, 2015). We contend that a necessary condition for working toward testimonial justice is through the inclusion and elevation of knowledge created and reported by those who have been historically excluded or made less credible.

Dialogues

One feature of this journal that supports conversation among people with varying perspectives on educational equity issues and provides a platform for disenfranchised people to speak for themselves in "broadly accessible and distinctly personal ways" (Mommandi, 2018, p. 45) is what we call *Dialogues*. In the *Dialogues* section of *The Assembly*, in addition to traditional open calls for proposals, we invite authors from diverse backgrounds, and with rich knowledge of the impact of education policy and practice to write about an educational issue with the goal of uplifting and centering voices not often in conversation with traditional education research and researchers. The editorial board works with groups outside of academia, such as community organizations and local educators, to identify potential authors that represent diverse communities impacted by education. The *Dialogues* section destabilizes the notion that traditional research articles are the authoritative word in what is best in education policy and practice. In the inaugural issue of *The Assembly,* the *Dialogues* section contained three critical essays focused on citizenship and migration relating to schools and schooling in the United States. The authors are university professors, graduate students, and a K-12 classroom teacher and each wrote from their own unique perspectives. These

authors are in conversation with one another, with no invited authors given more weight or credibility in the publishing process, about a particular relevant educational issue with an emphasis on equitable education policies and practices.

Organizing principle: Accessible and Comprehensible Research

The second organizing principle is that research must be accessible and comprehensible. Accessible and comprehensible research provides groups with less institutional power access to this knowledge which in turn provides them opportunities to refute false or incomplete information and to have their experiences named and validated in collective knowledge production. There are two conditions required in order to achieve this organizing principle. The first is simply that the knowledge is accessible. It cannot be restricted to only those with institutional power or wealth. This restriction is typically enacted in education research through paywalls. The second condition is comprehensibility. Should one gain access to an academic article, it is often impossible to understand due to the use of language that obscures meaning or the use of highly technical methods. Research must both be accessible and understandable, especially in order for disenfranchised groups to be able to have their experiences supported and validated in knowledge production.

Open Access

The first step in promoting accessible and comprehensible research is creating a full, open-access, online journal that provides a public forum for students, parents, educators, community members, and academics to be in dialogue with each other. This platform allows interactive articles by more traditional academics as well as authors whose knowledges are not typically valued within academia, and the publications of academics will not be privileged over other publications. This both encourages traditional scholars to rethink their positions as education researchers and uplifts the knowledges of public communities. These articles also include tools to increase access to both knowledge consumption and production. Being fully digital allows us to add links within articles to background information on specific educational issues or terms, and authors can create various multimedia displays that make their findings clear and accessible to wide audiences. We also provide abstracts in Spanish for every published article and aim to include more languages in the future as our capacity grows. Through these additional supports, we can publish quality education research from an assembly of experts that is created by, and accessible to, a much wider audience than is common in traditional scholarly journals.

Timely and Relevant Research

Though there are education research pieces that remain relevant over decades, much education research that is regularly cited is often out of date and does not align with the current issues in education. Traditional research articles are typically published several years after the initial research was conducted, and the scholars may have even moved on to other projects by the time an article is published. *The Assembly* seeks to publish articles that address timely and relevant education issues that promote educational equity. Often the people best positioned to speak to these timely issues are the people working directly in education spaces. Sometimes that is a traditional researcher, but more often, the knowledge from the people directly impacted by these issues in the current climate is the most valuable in order to promote educational equity. As a result, a free, open-access digital platform creates the space to publish papers from an array of authors in a more

timely manner. Because the professional expertise of classroom teachers is essential to promoting equity in education, we published articles from current teachers in each section of *The Assembly* in our inaugural issue. Alethea Maldonado (2018) shared experiences as a secondary English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher and those of her students who include immigrants and refugees. Her essay speaks to the present context of citizenship and immigration in the United States that is vital to understanding how to better serve immigrant and refugee students in public schools. Hayley Breden (2018), a high school social studies teacher, wrote about teachers' unions and illustrates how unions can better work toward social justice goals through current examples in Denver.

Changing Traditional Article Formats

Traditional article formats generally follow a prescribed organizational pattern that is well-known in traditional research publishing, but is fairly inaccessible to the general public. For example, published research often involves complicated methodological sections that may only be meaningful to others who engage in similar methodologies. In *The Assembly*, the article format and clear writing styles also supports accessibility to knowledge. Authors with complicated methodologies place those sections in the appendix, leaving the main body of the article available for the relevant findings and information general audiences would find meaningful. *The Assembly*'s submission guidelines asks potential authors to write for broad audiences regardless of whether they are submitting to the peer-reviewed section or the *Dialogues* section and, on submission, to explicitly state what audiences beyond academics, such as parents, teachers, school administrators, or community organizations, may be interested in their work and what they may gain from reading the article (Editorial Board, 2019). Asking submitters to be explicit about their intended audience not only helps authors be more intentional in writing in ways that can be understood by their audience, but also allows the editorial board to identify reviewers from those communities. While not impossible, without the reach these social media tools offer, it would be prohibitively difficult to find a unique pool of reviewers from varying communities for each article submission. The editorial board is also building a glossary with education research vocabulary that may be commonly used within the research community, but that may not be familiar to the general reader. As we publish more issues, we will add the glossary to the website. Digital platforms also allow us to include podcasts, videos, and news articles to popular media connected with the educational issues the journal publishes. These will be linked directly in the article where authors address the particular issues in order to encourage authors to acknowledge their own limitations and readers to gain information from a variety of reputable and accessible sources. We also include a "Weekly Round-Up" section which includes current events in education and maintain active social media accounts on multiple platforms.

Organizing Principle: Full Reciprocal Dialogue with those most Impacted by Education Research

The third organizing principle moves beyond including silenced voices and creating greater access to knowledge. Epistemic justice requires us as education researchers to hear and understand those who historically have been excluded from education research conversations. This means engaging in full, reciprocal dialogue as equal partners. Education research is always filtered through particular lenses of authors, which are informed by personal experiences and biases. It is important to engage with others whose experiences and knowledges may better or more fully inform equitable educational policies and practices.

Creating Conversations

In addition to accessibility of knowledge produced by diverse communities*, The Assembly* also provides readers the opportunity to respond to the pieces being published that will be included with the articles as responses are received. Typically, published scholarship is treated as a finished product. Digital platforms allow public responses to publications, encouraging authors to push and transform the research. After publication, the public can respond directly through various media tools such as blogs, comment sections, and online dialogues hosted by the editorial board through social media platforms such as Twitter. These responses provide another space where knowledges that are often ignored are seen, and where authors can hear and engage with such knowledges. The responses are moderated by the editorial board, not to silence dissent, but to ensure that dissent or differing viewpoints do not deny the experiences and knowledge of disenfranchised groups of people. We link these responses, in all of their formats, directly to the original article, allowing authors and readers to be a part of an ongoing dialogue. These platforms allow authors to continue to refine their ideas by publishing addendums or supplements that are attached to the original article. Traditionally, after peer review and publication, articles are thought of as finished products.

Beginning with the inaugural issue, every month we highlight a current topic in education on the journal website and our social media platforms. We highlight previous articles that we have published on the topic and supplement them with information on current events related to the topic, major media publications, and blog posts written by teachers and members of the community. We also post short, recorded interviews with the authors on their articles, responses from readers, and ongoing work and current experiences on the topic. For example, while highlighting teacher activism, we interviewed a researcher about her work, but also current teachers who were in the midst of, had taken part in, or were considering, teacher actions such as striking or walking out. All of these various digital media artifacts are collected together and help to create an ongoing conversations about an issue. Through digital tools, ideas can continue to be shaped and re-formed through reciprocal dialogue with an assembly of diverse communities, particularly marginalized communities who are most directly impacted by education policy and research.

Looking Forward

This work should not be seen as a replacement for traditional research. There is certainly an important role for the voice of researchers in education. Instead, a community knowledge-driven journal supplements and adds voices that have been traditionally excluded from collective understanding. In fact, the approaches used for *The Assembly* provide additional avenues for improving education research to further promote equity in education. For those of us within academia, this is a chance to do more than disseminate research. While we are aware of the structures within universities and other research organizations that contribute to epistemic injustice, we are also aware that our positionality within such an institution allows us to disrupt those structures and practices. As doctoral students who are pursuing higher degrees in order to engage in research that promotes equity in education, this journal is an opportunity for us to leverage institutional power to work towards a more encompassing approach to research and critical public knowledge. Digital platforms provide an opportunity to engage with others outside of traditional academic spheres in meaningful dialogue.

There are tensions and challenges that exist when "transforming conventional notions of research" (Schultz, 2018, p. 115) using digital platforms. Although we aim to expand notions of what it means to make valued contributions to educational research, researchers in universities are

often beholden to more traditional indicators of scholarship, such as impact factor and article citations. While alternative metrics, such as social media engagement, are becoming more widespread, it remains to be seen what, if any, effects these indicators may have on tenure review or other university-based evaluations. Beyond alternative metrics, we are also unsure of what kinds of metrics can measure justice-focused public scholarship that embodies the three organizing principles rather than simply measuring engagement. In addition to higher education institutional concerns, the diversity of authors we seek to represent in *The Assembly* requires additional support. Scholars who are well-versed in writing for traditional academic journals often need to be supported in writing for broader audiences, and scholars from outside academia need to be supported in understanding some of the conventions of academic writing expected when publishing in a scholarly journal. We are exploring a writing space that is new to education research, and as such, we are learning along with many of the authors. Though we do have access to many digital resources we would not have if we were not at a research-intensive university, our capacity as graduate students is still limited, forcing us to make difficult decisions such as only currently publishing abstracts in Spanish. However, these challenges are not insurmountable, and as we grow, both in numbers and capacity, we will be able to better represent even more diverse voices in education scholarship.

For the larger public*, The Assembly* opens previously-closed opportunities to produce and engage education stakeholders and communities with multiple knowledges. While we recognize that not everyone has easy access to internet, a much broader group of people have access to these resources via smartphone and other devices than the people with affordable and reasonable access to scholarly journals. We fully recognize that *The Assembly* is only one step in addressing epistemic injustice, but we believe it is an important step, particularly due to our commitment to center previously excluded voices and knowledges. Digital platforms, along with a commitment to epistemic justice, offer tools to reimagine the division between subjects and objects of educational research so that we may work toward justice through diverse public knowledges together.

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