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Editor's Note

It barely needs to be stated that the COVID-19 pandemic had, and continues to have, devastating effects on our communities and on our country. The pandemic is nearly impossible to write about in general terms, as each of our intersecting identities--race, class, gender, and disability, to name only a few--and those of our family and friends, determined each of our experiences with regard to COVID-19. And yet it shifted how all of us lived our lives, conducted research, and interacted with our academic communities. This Special Issue of *InterActions* is a collaboration with the 2020 UCLA Research and Inquiry Conference (R&I). The 2020 R&I Conference had accepted its panelists when the year-long lockdown started, and instead of doing a Zoom conference, Olivia Obeso, conference organizer and guest editor for this issue, reached out to the editors of *InterActions* to inquire about giving the accepted conference presenters the opportunity to publish their work in the Journal. We thought this was a great idea: a chance to lessen Zoom fatigue *and* give presenters who wanted to publish their work an opportunity to do so. Accepted conference presenters were given the opportunity to either submit an abstract or a full-length article to our editorial team. Articles and abstracts were then taken through the peer review process, edited, and copyedited, and you have the product before you: a collection of marvelous research conducted largely before the COVID-19 lockdown, and written during it. This Special Issue would not exist without the effects of the pandemic, but the work within it moves beyond it: the COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly contextually significant, but it does not threaten to overtake any of the research presented herein. We found that the abstracts and the full-length articles in this issue are often deeply in conversation with one another thematically, methodologically, and in terms of subject matter: in this introduction, the abstracts are discussed alongside the full-length articles, but in the issue itself they are in different sections.

Maxwell Pereyra's article, "A Qualitative Study on Queer College Student Desire," looks at the experiences of queer masculine college students, specifically around romatic desire. His article explores this under-theorized topic thoughtfully and concisely, through the lenses of intersectionality and queer theory. Caleb Allen's "Shooting Spitballs at Tanks: The Neoliberal University and the Limits of Open Access," critiques the limits of the Gold Model of open access, questioning the tangible efficacy of such a model and looking to the future for alternatives. Seul Lee's abstract discusses the limitations of historical materials, arguing for greater attention to the context in which they were created. Pereyra's and Allen's articles and Lee's abstract all point to the importance of often-overlooked, shifting contextual factors: what it means to experience and speak about queer desire from a masculine-of-center standpoint, how open access actually functions in practice, and how it might counter-intuitively contribute to the precarity of academic workers, and how digital archives contain built-in biases that are seldom critically unpacked by historical researchers.

Fostering cultural awareness and building a strong classroom community through cross-cultural, cross-linguistic communication and support permeates Anamika Ghosh's and Linli Zhou's articles, as well as Clemence Darriet's abstract. Ghosh's "Promoting Student Discourse in a Linguistically Diverse Community-of-Learners Classroom" deftly analyzes her own experiences as a teacher, using auto-ethnographic methods. Ghosh discusses her attempts to foster a classroom environment in which her students, especially Emergent Bilingual students, can feel confident speaking to the classroom, as well as collaborating with other students. Zhou's "Cross-Cultural Mentoring: Cultural Awareness and Identity Empowerment" challenges the status quo that only same-culture mentoring benefits students. Zhou discusses how cross-cultural mentoring empowers the identity of mentors and mentees and cultivates their social skills including self-awareness and cultural recognition. Darriet's abstract focuses on a dual-language teacher's beliefs about language and bilingualism and how they relate to her practice.

Juilo Alicea's "Race, Space, and the Built Pedagogical Environment," uses ethnographic methodology to study the public pedagogies of race at Biddy Mason High School (BMHS), located in the heart of South Central LA. Using their the decorative and informative nature of BMHS's hallways content, Alicea's article draws on Monahan's (2002) idea of "built pedagogy," to argue that BMHS's hallways exemplify the "built pedagogical environment." Belén Moreno's "Anger as a Tool for Decolonization and Student Empowerment," walks readers through lesson plans and class discussions she developed as a social studies instructor with her 12th grade students of color. Using a decolonial theoretical lens, she encourages readers to reconceptualize student anger, engagement, and emotions when incorporating intersectional curriculum; showing the need for culturally relevant pedagogy. Andrea Gambino's abstract asks how graduate Teaching Assistants describe and practice their critical pedagogy (drawing on Freire). She finds that their problem-posing dialogic discourse is often used as a strategy for community building and supporting students' navigating higher education. Christine Abagat-Liboon, Marco Murillo, and Karen Hunter Quartz's abstract presents important factors in developing an immigrant legal clinic at a community school site. Alicea's and Moreno's articles, and Gambino's and Abagat-Liboon et al.'s abstracts illustrate that building strong community in the classroom and the school involves rethinking pedagogy: where it exists in space and place, what role emotions and discourse play in its construction.

Imagining, conceptualizing, moving towards, navigating, and ultimately, for some, subverting the doctrines of higher education is a complex process for students, especially students of color, as illustrated in Sophia Ángeles and Liza Chavac's articles and Jessic Schnittka Hoskins' abstract. In Sophia Ángeles's analytical study, she examines what 3rd-5th grade children understand about college. Utilizing letter writing, mapping out college journeys, and following college Instagram accounts, Sophia discusses the conversations that took place about what it means to go to college, how one prepares for college, and the purposes of attending college. Liza

Chavac's article, “The Persistence and Success of Latino Men in Community College,” presents readers with a critical examination on the use of Community Cultural Wealth by Latino students as they navigate their transfer process. Chavac expands our understanding of these experiences by showing experiences of resistance and success for these students; while also sharing suggestions to better support these students. Jessica Schnittka Hoskins's abstract uses survey methodology and multi-level linear growth models to examine school mobility as a source of stress for African-American students, ultimately finding effects that were more tied to the perceived safety of a school climate than mobility itself.

The articles in this issue use qualitative and quantitative methods, a variety of theoretical frameworks, and explore a range of consequential topics critically and with confidence. From language, to context, to pedagogy, to classroom community, all of these authors ask us as readers to subvert and rethink basic concepts inherent within education and information studies, so that we might look to the future of our disciplines.