

## Foreword

**Phyllis Curtis-Tweed**  
**Lynette Woods**  
**Co- Editors**

The year 2020 will be forever associated with two major global events: the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and a renewed focus on racial and social justice. The theme for this year's BC Journal Voices in Education, *Education 2020: The Great Online Pivot & the Intersection of Education and Race*, aptly addresses these two prescient concerns.

The coronavirus pandemic took the world by storm causing illness and death globally. It resulted in lockdowns and health and safety measures designed to stem the spread of the virus. During this timeframe, the world has been flooded with concerns about health and safety with heightened focus on mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Educators everywhere engaged in a sudden forced pivot to virtual instructional platforms which further isolated instructors and learners but also unveiled inequities in access to technology and possible deficits in teacher preparation for online instruction.

Lightbourne describes the changes that teachers had to make to adjust their teaching delivery, voluntarily and involuntarily. She talks about the stressors that the pandemic caused using the Kübler-Ross cycles of change, usually associated with responses to death, as metaphorical to the dispositional changes that occurred for educators during the pandemic. She also states that these occurrences underscored the need for educators to build stronger relationships with one another, noting that some would not have gotten through without calling on others.

Being able to call on others is also relevant to the article by McFarlane and Wallder on academic advising. They discuss a study that indicated the effectiveness and value of academic advising which is always essential to student success but became even more important for academic and career guidance during the pandemic. They found that students did seek out advisors for their expertise and also preferred to speak with advisors about personal matters.

Seeking support is one of the coping strategies that Maybury recommends for maintaining mental health during a crisis. Maybury generally highlights the magnitude of anxiety and its inroads into all segments of society and provides strategies for relieving/lessening and controlling anxiety.

As this crisis was emerging, an unprecedented heightened global focus on racial and social justice was stimulated by the horrific murder of George Floyd recorded on video and seen globally. Marches and protests on racial and social injustice rivalled events of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement in their intensity and were supported across racial boundaries.

The pandemic provided a context for unveiling continued inequities by race and class and the racial crisis called attention to the role of education in empowering communities of colour. Harvey describes glaring evidence of inequality in systems worldwide relative to climate change and to experiences of Covid-19. The inequities are global and are differentiated by race, age, and socioeconomic status, impacting economically disadvantaged communities of colour disproportionately. She recommends that education can close such gaps and empower communities by equipping them with tools that foster resilience and sustainability.

Smith encourages educators and students to use art as a viable medium to respond to felt life experiences specifically considering issues of race. He advocates for the creation of art in Bermuda in particular as a medium for expressing lived experiences related to racial oppression. He evidences approaches to the subject of race made by artists connected with Bermuda.

Wolde stresses that harmonizing community equity depends on actions beyond marches and protests. He stresses that multicultural education coupled with honest cultural socialization should be the benchmark for all models of

social restructuring. He describes this as the moral responsibility of educators on the path towards an egalitarian system.

Curtis-Tweed argues that Bermuda must seek to close the racial and socioeconomic divides historically perpetuated in public and private education in a neo-colonial context. Stakeholders must grapple with the undergirding elements which sustain the divide by addressing race relations, depoliticizing education, and encouraging the development of agency to empower oppressed communities.

The topics of covid-19 and the intersection of education and race, at first glance, might seem disparate. However, these topics and resultant articles are unified and overlap on the themes of inequity, resilience, and empowerment. Both the pandemic and the death of George Floyd seemed to pull the proverbial tenuous scab off a wound of inequity that cannot heal without intervention. Much has happened globally in the timeframe between the emergence of these crises and the present time. However, to date the pandemic thrives, and the same concerns regarding racial and social inequity and injustice are also extant. Hope for change still focuses on education to provide an equalizing context and a path forward.