

Journal of Teacher Education

<http://jte.sagepub.com/>

Speaking of Bodies in Justice-Oriented, Feminist Teacher Education

Stephanie Jones and Hilary Hughes-Decatur

Journal of Teacher Education 2012 63: 51 originally published online 5 December 2011

DOI: 10.1177/0022487111422535

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://jte.sagepub.com/content/63/1/51>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:



[American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education \(AACTE\)](#)

Additional services and information for *Journal of Teacher Education* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://jte.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://jte.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations: <http://jte.sagepub.com/content/63/1/51.refs.html>

>> [Version of Record](#) - Jan 6, 2012

[Proof](#) - Dec 5, 2011

[What is This?](#)

Speaking of Bodies in Justice-Oriented, Feminist Teacher Education

Journal of Teacher Education
63(1) 51–61
© 2012 American Association of
Colleges for Teacher Education
Reprints and permission: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>
DOI: 10.1177/0022487111422535
<http://jte.sagepub.com>



Stephanie Jones¹ and Hilary Hughes-Decatur²

Abstract

The United States is a society that is simultaneously consumed and repulsed by the body; a society where obsession over a constructed “obesity” epidemic runs alongside obsession over thinness; a society where advertisers manipulate digital images of bodies to present two-dimensional versions of ideal male and female physiques, and plastic surgeons cut, suck, tuck, and fill three-dimensional fleshed versions of those digital images. In this article, the authors articulate a theory of a critical body pedagogy that can contribute to a larger justice-oriented project. This project is one of shaping young women and men who are more comfortable in their bodies, who will engage in critical readings of body-related texts, and—perhaps—can one day help future early childhood and elementary students construct healthier relationships with their bodies and the larger world through a justice-oriented pedagogy.

Keywords

justice-oriented pedagogy, social justice teacher education, feminist pedagogy, bodies, body image, preservice teachers

My body, the body of the teacher, is inseparable from the curriculum. Perhaps the body of the teacher is the curriculum.

Mimi Orner, 2002

The United States is a society that is simultaneously consumed and repulsed by the body; a society where obsession over a constructed obesity epidemic runs alongside obsession over thinness; a society where advertisers manipulate digital images of bodies to present two-dimensional versions of ideal male and female physiques; and plastic surgeons cut, suck, tuck, and fill three-dimensional fleshed versions of those digital images. These contradictory, obsessive, and unattainable expectations and experiences with and about the body are intimately linked with neoliberal and market-induced goals of the exercise–industrial complex (Newman, Albright, & King-White, 2011)—a system that historically focused on girls and women, but now leaves *everyone* wounded. Bordo (2003) described this as a “cultural tidal wave of obsession with achieving a disciplined, normalized body” (p. xx) in American culture, and, paradoxically, we live through the silencing of those same bodies in public and education spaces.

The body—and of particular importance in elementary education, the female body—is manipulated and shaped to the ideological contours of whatever existing hegemonic power is in place. This is a story about those bodies in educational spaces: big bodies, scrawny bodies, chiseled bodies, abused bodies, self-stimulated bodies, self-deprecating bodies, bodies that are desired and bodies that are repulsed,

and bodies that are observed and disciplined and cultivated and obsessed over. It is a story about bodies in teacher education classes on campuses all over the United States teaching and learning about the raced, gendered, sexed, abled, and classed nature of power (e.g., Allen & Hermann-Wilmarth, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2004a, 2004b; Conklin, 2008; Hermann-Wilmarth, 2007; Jones, 2006c; Lowenstein, 2009; McDonald & Zeichner, 2008; Miller & Kirkland, 2010; Sleeter, 2008; Vavrus, 2009; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Zeichner & Conklin, 2008), while they simultaneously negotiate the pressures of how and where they fit in a body-obsessed society. As preservice student bodies read articles and books about creating powerful educational spaces where their future students can challenge claims of truth and remake the world in more just ways, some of them are sidetracked by the oppressive pressure to be/become a certain kind of body: thin, beautiful, and feminine.

Drawing on a long history of feminist pedagogies (Cohee et al., 1998; Ellsworth, 1993; Grumet, 1988; Hicks, 2002, 2004, 2005; hooks, 1994, 2000, 2003; Jones, 2006a, 2006c, 2009, 2010; Maher, 1999; Orner, 2002; Shapiro, 1999; Vavrus, 2009; Weiler, 1987, 1994) and feminist perspectives of the body (Bordo, 2003; Butler, 1993; Orbach, 2009;

¹The University of Georgia, Athens, USA

²Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, USA

Corresponding Author:

Stephanie Jones, Associate Professor, The University of Georgia, 629 Aderhold, Athens, GA 30602, USA
Email: sjones1@uga.edu

Youdell, 2006), we aim to capture a sustained look at, and listen to, the students in our teacher education classes—and ourselves—to explore what a *critical pedagogy of the body* might look like in teacher education. Each of us has worked for the past 10 and 5 years, respectively, to engage university students in critical pedagogies aimed at educating future teachers who would work against injustices and toward a fuller and more humanizing education for all children. We have engaged critical, feminist, and postmodern theories and pedagogies; immersed ourselves in literature about justice-oriented teacher education; critiqued monolithic and homogenizing characterizations of teacher education students; resisted perpetuating patterns of anti-intellectual practices in teacher education; and closely studied individual assignments, courses, and students/teachers across long stretches of time, wondering how things were going and if we knew where we were going. But somewhere along the way we heard the faint whispers of bodies: what they were eating and not eating, how that person looked, how this person wanted to look, what guys said about girls behind their backs, what girls said about girls behind their backs, how much they were exercising, how much more they should be exercising, and the guilt and shame for not doing everything they could do to be *more*. Of course, once we attuned our ears to the whisper it became more like a roar, a yelp, a cry, and a silence that was deafening.

We responded to these faint whispers, loud screams, and silences through pedagogical practices, which asked our pre-service students to engage in conversations about bodies: protagonists' bodies in the novels and memoirs they were reading for our class, popular culture bodies represented in the media, and, most importantly, their own bodies. We were curious to explore what Mimi Orner (2002) referred to as the absent presence of the curriculum of the body—"the controlled, disciplined, micromanaged, and technologized body" (pp. 275-276), and we did this by conceptualizing and engaging in a critical pedagogy of the body in the Orientation course for the Early Childhood Education program. For us, a critical pedagogy of the body takes, as its starting point, the body as the

material form of the body politic . . . The struggle for control over the meanings and pleasures (and therefore the behaviors) of the body is crucial because the body is where the social is most convincingly represented as the individual and where politics can best disguise itself as human nature. (Fiske as cited in Nespor, 1997, p. 119)

Therefore our aims were twofold: We tried to work with our students to understand the concealed power that is inscribed on bodies—or the direct grip (Foucault, 1977) American culture has on the body—and we tried to create a pedagogic process that "gives attention to the project of liberation in a way that takes seriously the body as a site for self

and social transformation" (Shapiro, 1999, p. x). As justice-oriented educators, we believe that bodies that are moving, speaking, and interacting in particular ways produce social spaces. Sometimes, the spaces produced are racist, sexist, misogynist, exclusionary, and oppressive, but when individuals work on their own bodies as a site for self-transformation, they can move, speak, and interact differently and produce new social spaces—perhaps spaces of inclusion, value, acceptance, and power.

In the pages that follow, we articulate a theory of a critical body pedagogy and draw on class readings, writings, activities, class discussions, and our reflective notes to explore what this critical pedagogy of the body afforded for our pre-service education students—and us—as we took up "questions of identity, justice, moral responsibility, ideological conformity, and resistance through an engagement with our own body experiences and memories" (Shapiro, 1999, p. x). We draw on these experiences to simultaneously conceptualize, and argue for, a critical pedagogy of the body in teacher education because we believe it can contribute to a larger project of shaping young women and men who are more comfortable in their bodies, who will engage in critical readings of body-related texts, and, perhaps, may one day help future elementary students construct healthier relationships with their bodies and the larger world through a justice-oriented pedagogy.

Background: Body Obsessions in Education

A kindergarten boy is suspended for saying the word *coochie* (informal word for vagina) in school, but other kindergarten children speak freely about who is "fat" or "skinny" and about their teacher who is trying to lose weight and not allowed to eat chocolate. A first-grade girl is given the cold shoulder by her friend after drawing a picture of the two of them on the playground that the friend perceived "made [the artist] look skinny and [the friend] look fat." A relieved undergraduate teacher education student thanks his instructor for talking about the natural occurrence of childhood masturbation. An underweight second-grade girl pinches her thin stomach and announces, "Look at this fat." Four teachers sit in a teachers' lounge and discuss the "points" they have left for the day according to their *Weight Watchers*© diet and how they plan to spend them on their consumption of food. A 6-year-old child writes a note to her father at home, "You are not fat. I am fat." An undergraduate teacher education student cries during a class discussion about body image and another emails her professor to thank her for using a plastic surgery advertisement to introduce critical text analysis practices. In a school conference about a third-grade girl's progress in mathematics, teachers focus on her large body and perceived lack of femininity instead of her academic work. An entire class of undergraduate teacher education students balks at the idea of saying

“vagina” aloud to themselves, one another, or young children in their future elementary classrooms. These are just a sampling of the bodied-stories we have experienced and retold in our teacher education classes when trying to relay to our students that the suffocating forces of the body-centered context through which we live our lives do not stop at the schoolroom door. These forces cross the threshold into institutions where young children, adolescents, and their teachers spend most of their waking hours during the day—in spaces where such forces can be perpetuated or disrupted.

There are a plethora of educational researchers committed to body-centered inquiry, critique, and pedagogies that have largely focused on issues of sexuality (e.g., Blackburn, 2003; Blackburn & Buckley, 2005; Blackburn, Clark, Kenney, & Smith, 2010; Fine, 1988; Fine & McLelland, 2006; Hermann-Wilmarth, 2007; Hughes, 2010a; Johnson, 2005; Kumashiro, 2004, 2009; Vavrus, 2009), and there are feminist inquiries into how the body-in-education is specifically classed, raced, and gendered (e.g., Bettie, 2002; Hicks, 2002, 2004, 2005; Hughes, 2011; Jones, 2003, 2006b; Reay, 1998; Walkerdine, 1997; Walkerdine, Lucey, & Melody, 2001; Youdell, 2006). However, we have found little reference in educational research—and more specifically, teacher education research—on body image or critical pedagogies engaging bodies and body image. Our own theory of a critical body pedagogy led to assignments and discussions in our classes where students articulated rich insights to sexuality, desire, pleasure, heteronormativity, and other body-related discourses both circulating and absent in teacher education. For purposes of space and focus here, we illuminate issues of body image to buttress our theoretical stance, and help fill a void in, and generate more questions for, teacher education.

Students in our classes reflected the U.S. trend of Elementary Education programs attracting many White, female, middle-class, heterosexual, monolingual, and Christian students (e.g., Conklin, 2008; McDonald & Zeichner, 2008; Sleeter, 2008). However, we situate our work within critical studies of the construction of a monolithic teacher education candidate (Hughes, 2010b; Jones, 2009; Lensmire & Snaza, 2010; Lowenstein, 2009) and argue that a more nuanced knowing of students presents a more diverse student *body*. For example, each semester, we had students who identified themselves as first-generation college students; from poor and working-class families; from wealthy families; mothers who were both married and unmarried; males; African American; Latino; Indian; multiracial; Jewish; Muslim; Mormon; agnostic; bilingual; questioning organized religion; from families with multiple marriages or partnerships, homosexual and bisexual relationships, international travels, small-town insularity; or having various experiences with the criminal justice system, and intimate experiences with drug addiction and mental illness—all of this in a context that seemed “very” White, middle-class, heterosexual, Christian, and monolingual from the outset.

Disrupting the Monolithic Notion of Body Image

We share the diversity of our students because it was clear in our experiences that particular cultural locations or histories did not correlate with particular body image or bodied experiences, and there were many differences. In other words, every single student across race/ethnicity/gender/sexuality/religion/social class wrote or talked about being wounded by discourses around bodies and body image. For over two decades the “profile” for bodies that are rapt with insecurity and participating in body mutilation practices has been presented as heterogeneous and static, and it has been assigned to mostly White, middle-class females (see Bordo, 2003; Orbach, 2009); but no racial or ethnic group, no gender-specific body is invulnerable to the slenderness ideal and body insecurities that have been inscribed on the Western, and more recently Eastern, body in this current climate. After all, the body is a commodity, and body insecurities can be “exported, imported, and marketed across the globe—just like any other profitable commodity” (Bordo, 2003, p. xxiv). Though body dissatisfaction might have been born out of a White, middle-class, and female discourse, it has crept across racial/ethnic, gender, and class lines so that no one is kept from its influences. Bordo (2003) elaborated on this idea further:

Like the Black Africans and the Fijians and the Russians (and lesbians and Latins and every other “subculture” boasting a history of regard for fleshy women), African Americans were believed “protected” by their alternative cultural values. And so, many young girls were left feeling stranded and alone, dealing with feelings about their bodies that they weren’t “supposed” to have, as they struggled, along with their white peers, with unprecedented pressure to achieve, and watched Janet Jackson and Halle Berry shrink before their eyes. (p. xix)

Thompson (1994) challenged the stereotype of White middle-classness as predisposed to experience negative issues around body image, writing more than 15 years ago that, “The recent literature on eating problems among African American, Latina, Asian-American, and Native American women, working-class women, and lesbians casts doubt on the accuracy of this [white, middle-class] profile” (p. 355). She and other feminist researchers concerned with body image and eating disorders argue that rather than reflecting the actual prevalence of eating problems, the focus on White middle-class women in research studies more accurately reflects “which particular populations of women have been studied” and “health professionals’ lack of familiarity with ethnic diversity may have also obscured attention to women of color” (p. 355). Thompson’s studies offered nuanced analyses of Latina, African American, working-class, and

lesbian women suffering from eating problems and found that although many of them thought their culture was *supposed* to accept bigger or more curvaceous bodies, they did not believe their own “chunky” bodies were accepted by family members or the broader society.

More recently, Hilary conducted a study with young adolescent girls of color (Hughes, 2011) and found that the African American and Puerto Rican girls constantly moved back and forth between their perceptions of how they thought they were supposed to “be” in their bodies according to cultural norms (shapely bodies/curvy bodies-as-beautiful) and their perceptions of what American culture and their peers wanted them to look like: thinner, less “flabby,” and fit. Love’s work (2010) with young adolescent girls of color points to a similar trend: She believes that a traditional valuing of “bigger” girls in African American families, for example, was a result of mothers and grandmothers having greater influence over young girls’ perceptions of themselves. In 2011, however, all youth are immersed in popular culture and media images that perpetuate the tight link between thinness/beauty/power regardless of race or ethnicity. The artfully arranged bodies in popular culture ads, videos, movies, television, and fashion teach our youth “how to see (and evaluate) bodies, but also they offer fantasies of safety, self-containment, acceptance, [and] immunity from pain and hurt” (Bordo, 2003, p. xxi). And for those racial and ethnic bodies “that have been marked as foreign, earthy, and primitive, or considered unattractive by Anglo-Saxon norms, they may cast the lure of assimilation, of becoming (metaphorically speaking) ‘white’” (pp. xxi-xxii).

Our primary project, then, was to use a theory of a critical body pedagogy to construct specific assignments that might open up discursive spaces where dominant perceptions of “normal” bodies were explored, critiqued, and reconsidered. To illustrate this theory, we briefly describe the assignments and draw on empirical data from a diverse range of students’ assignments.

Critical Body Pedagogy in a Teacher Education Classroom

Assuming the body is the nexus of meaning-making, the reception point of everything in the social and natural world, and the embodiment of perceptions made and remade across time and space, we put forth this theory of a critical body pedagogy because we see the potential for substantial and challenging developments and applications, not only in our own teacher education classes but also in teacher education as a field. One of the first writing assignments we assigned—*From Where Do I Read the World?*—for example, asked students to focus on their own bodies and lived experiences so they could articulate how their embodied experiences of an inequitable society affected the ways they perceived the world around them. They had several prompts to help them think about different aspects of their embodiment, including race,

ethnicity, language, religion, sexuality, social class, abledness, geography, gender, relationships, family structures, and body image. An overwhelming number of the students regularly incorporated issues of body image in their essays, a trend we initially found surprising and later came to expect.

Rooted in feminist epistemology, this kind of assignment allowed students to begin with a focus on their embodied experiences in the world while it simultaneously attributed inherent values to their lived realities. This is particularly important in teacher education where so much attention is aimed at learning about *others*, and what *others* need to learn best. If we believe, as we do, that the teacher’s body *is* pedagogy, that her students and others will perceive her in multiple ways that will fundamentally shape their learning experiences (e.g., Nespor, 1997), then teachers themselves need time to deeply reflect on and actively consider their bodies. They can consider how their body is shaped and contoured according to particular social and political demands in their immediate lives and in the media, they can engage in intellectual inquiries around how comfortable they are with their bodies in different spaces, and they can explore their most intimate thoughts and critiques of their own bodies. Theorizing our own bodies first—exploring the assumptions we have about our bodies that are always being read by others, including students in the classroom—opens up possibilities for articulating how and why bodies matter in education.

The personal is the political, however, and in a theory of a critical body pedagogy, personal experiences should also be considered within broader sociopolitical contexts. An assignment designed to help students recognize the complex ways bodies are tangled up in a web of overlapping contexts was the reading of self-selected novels and memoirs. Having already analyzed the ways their perceptions of the world had been shaped through different embodied experiences in private and public settings in the *From Where Do I Read the World?* essays, students began reading novels and memoirs, paying particular attention to how different characters and their bodies were positioned in different spaces throughout the text. This decision to use popular novels and memoirs that seemingly had nothing to do with teaching or education was grounded in the notion that reading literature engages the body/emotions and can be transformative for a reader (e.g., Boler, 1999; Dutro, 2008; Felman & Laub, 1992; Sumara, Davis, & Iftody, 2006) in ways reading traditional educational research or school narratives may not (e.g., Jones, 2006c, forthcoming, under review)—and beginning with assignments focused on the body/self and having students read critically about bodies in novels and memoirs, we began to see seeds of transformation taking place. Students asked existential questions such as, “How did we get to this place?” referring to a society where one skin color is arbitrarily determined to be better than another, where “fit” bodies are preferred over curvy bodies, where facial features are dissected and criticized or admired, and where a certain kind of accent is privileged over another.

In Orbach's (2009) recent work on women's bodies in "late modernity," she posited that the problems she described more than 30 years ago in relation to the ways cultural forces are at work on women's bodies have mushroomed. Capitalism is the major force at work today, according to Orbach, and the "merchants of body hatred" will keep us anxious and always wanting more. Capitalism "works much better if we hate our bodies . . . if we're anxious and needy when it comes to something as fundamental as our bodies, we are putty in the hands of marketers and diet-merchants" (Leith, 2009, para. 6)—and if we ever start feeling comfortable with the bodies we have, "along comes another body—another piece of unattainable perfection to keep us anxious" (Leith, para. 6).

An activity we assigned to have students interrogate some of the products constructed by "merchants of body hatred" was to engage critical literacies (e.g., Jones, 2006a, 2006c) to analyze a television commercial, an oral conversation, a magazine advertisement, or some other text in the students' everyday world. Our theoretical assumption was that the analytical tools we assumed students need to use in their future classrooms to work toward social justice (e.g., deconstructive analyses of power, positioning, and perspective, and reconstructing texts/scenarios toward a more just vision) could be cultivated first in students' own analyses of their immediate contexts that had so much power in shaping their bodies.

In the following sections, we illuminate the pedagogical possibilities of employing a critical body pedagogy in teacher education by drawing on empirical data excerpts from a 3-year study of enacting a critical body pedagogy in our undergraduate teacher education courses. We use excerpts from students' written work and recorded small/large group discussions to demonstrate this need because we *all* address the bodies that show up to our classrooms—we just do not always address them with a body consciousness. As Orner (2002) maintained,

The work I do on body image—the work *I am* on body image and the relentless pursuit of thinness—leads me to examine the interplay of desire and repression in and outside of the classroom. As I think about pedagogical modes of address, we—others present and myself—address the bodies that show up to class. We are all making meanings about each other, about each other's bodies . . . New meanings—other ways to think about the body, my body, our bodies—make a difference; these meanings are difference. (p. 279)

The Normal Body as Skinny

It's like drilled in his head, the important things for him . . . look this certain way, lose some weight so you can get some girls, and get as many numbers as you can get to prove you're a man . . . to be criticized by

how many girls you've slept with. (Student participant talking about the main character in *Oscar Wao*)

It just shows that people are always judging you. (Student participant talking about personal connections to *Moose*)

One of the most powerful ways individuals and groups of people are controlled is through normative discourses operating through the everyday speech of what comes to be assumed "normal" and therefore what, by default, deviates from the norm (Foucault, 1977, 1990). We anticipated what we refer to here as the "slenderness ideal," to be a part of students' discourses, but we were not prepared for the overwhelming presence of it across race/ethnicity, class, gender, religion, and other differences among students. This discursive practice illustrates the skewed perception of what a normal body is supposed to be according to the obsessive slenderness ideal that has a direct grip on American culture. The students' responses quoted above refer to two of the self-selected novels/memoirs they read (Diaz, 2008; Klein, 2008), and together the quotes get to the heart of constructions of normalizing discourses around the body: A thinner body will "get" you something; even when pressure is on men to get fit, the discourse still objectifies women; and no matter what you do you are being judged based on people's perceptions of your body. Essay after essay described students' ongoing battles with their bodies to be "thin enough," their perceptions about what it means to have a "normal" body, the constant guilt and shame some of them had (and still have) because their "naturally thin bodies" were the focal point of comparison by peers who did not feel thin enough, and their growing recognition of bodies-as-objects.

Engaging students in critical assignments and discussions around the body allowed us to explore together that all of our bodies have pedagogies of their own. "Meanings are generated, broken, and reattached to other meanings in an invisible exchange" (Orner, 2002, p. 279). One student, for example, often talked about how women and girls in her culture were treated based on the lightness or darkness of their skin and wrote that body image issues played an important role in her life because she was expected to follow her family's conservative cultural tradition that prefers arranged marriages. "People in our community pressure girls a lot to look beautiful . . . these people think that because parents decide to arrange their son's marriage, they usually look for a girl who is fair, slim, and educated." Within these bodily claims, the insidious discourse of "normal body" constitutes "skinny, tall, and pretty" as normal, and anything deviating from these subjective descriptors as abnormal, as defective, as a pathology in need of fixing. Another student wrote that society had a large impact on her body image, so much so that in elementary school

I never ate the crust on bread, however when I was in middle school I read on the Internet that the crust of

bread makes you prettier and helps with shine in your hair. So what did I do? I began to eat the crust on bread.

Multiple students wrote about the media's negative influence on their perception of normal bodies, always referring to the "women on television [who] are tan, skinny, have a clear complexion, and wear trendy clothes," noting that these women are the ones "who girls, even women today want to look like." This same student (along with several others, both African American and White) described how she used to think when she was young that if she had enough money she could look like the women on television, and that "people are judged if they are pretty based on . . . this image of pretty that the media reveals to society." How could it be otherwise in a society where, as Orbach (2009) posited, the body has become "a series of visual images and a labor process in itself? We manufacture our bodies . . . The quotidian throwaway commentary on our body and its discontents expresses a culture that has been on its way to bodily disenfranchisement from industrialization on" (p. 93).

Just as Brantlinger (2007) wrote about there being "no winners" in the social class game of capitalism, the excerpts in this section illustrate that in the slenderness ideal game of life—tied closely to capitalist markets, advertising, and products or services for purchase (Orbach, 2009)—there are also no winners. No one wins when there is one dominant discourse that constitutes what is knowable to us as a normal and desirable body. And all of these bodies—every single one of them—will be teaching young children through their body pedagogy just like the teaching/learning they have engaged in their whole lives from others' bodies. Because this ubiquitous body pedagogy is always, already taking place, we prefer that teacher educators engage the topic and better prepare preservice teacher education students to begin disrupting some of their own skewed practices that are bound up in these dominant discourses about body size and body image that have become transcultural, and prepare them to be critically conscious of the body pedagogy that will be naturally occurring in their elementary classrooms.

Critiquing the Normal Body Discourse

Orner (2002) offered a poignant beginning point from which to consider deconstructing normal bodies in society and therefore also in education:

Normal in what chair? What clothes? Normal is my worst enemy, my most uncharitable critic. Normal is so damned oppressive. Who is she this normal specter haunting my every waking moment undermining me, my sense of self, my possibilities? Celebrate the death of normal, her undoing. Free us all from fat hating, thin hating, homophobia, racism, anti-Semitism. Normal is a doctor's chart that just erased me. It's the asshole in the car in front of me with the "harpoon fat

chicks" bumper sticker. Normal is my doctor telling me to lose weight when I saw him for dermatitis. I want out of normal. I want my words, life fire, to burn normal until it can do no more harm to any of us anymore. (p. 280)

Orner's (2002) undoing of normal could be used as a larger theme for how we frame the justice-oriented work we as teacher educators do around race, class, gender, sexuality, language, religion, and so on, but for now we begin with the normal body as perceived and critiqued by the teacher education students in our classes and as expressed in their assignments.

There were six people, three men and three women. They were all strategically intertwined so you could see just the right amount of "T&A." The men were all ripped with dark hair and exotic tans. The women also had great bodies. Two of the women were white and one woman was black . . . All of their eyes were inviting, as if they were saying, "You want to be like us, so buy this perfume." My reply to that is, "Wait, this ad is for perfume?" (Student *Critical Reading* excerpt)

The students' critiques of the "normal" and the normal body as skinny (and normal female body as object) in their discussions and essays were insightful, smart, and necessary. Doing this kind of critical work opened up spaces for the majority of students to recognize the importance attached to the female body in the production of ideological subjugation (Shapiro, 1999). The objectification of women's bodies as passive sex objects surrendering to the power of men and the reoccurring references to "slender, White, middle-class, and heterosexual" bodies-as-normal in media were prevalent in more than half of critical reading essays submitted and in all of the discussions of their choice books. Students critically pointed out how advertisements positioned bodies as sexual or slender to sell a product and how women's bodies were positioned as submissive and passive and to be consumed by men. Students also narrated themselves into the analyses, illustrating the bodywork that has been done to them by the dominant discourses surrounding the body. Many courageously wrote that they were aware of the harm that the ads were doing to women's bodies and body images, and they also at some point in time—even in the present—had desired the very body image/way of being with which they were critiquing.

The student who chose the Dolce & Gabbana ad featuring the six partially naked bodies mentioned above, for example, wrote,

As someone who doesn't fit into the sexy model category, I am a target. Fortunately, I know that buying their fragrance won't do anything but aggravate my allergies, but unfortunately, it does make me feel like I should get up and do some sit ups. No matter how

good I feel about my body, it's difficult not to admire their toned muscles. I believe that's their big trick; they connect power to sexuality, sexuality to "fitting in," and "fitting in" to physical appearance. I bet that being constantly bombarded by society's insistence that you must have a perfect body would take its toll and cause even the most self-assured person in the world to feel a little insecure.

This student explored the complex relationships between images we are "bombarded by" and how they affect the mind and actions even when one intellectually critiques the skewed version of reality and desirability presented in those images.

Another student described a full-page ad of a woman wearing lingerie. "Her White body was slender, toned, and tan. Only the woman's torso, arms, neck, chin, and lips were shown. Across the woman's chest read the words: Be out of more leagues." This student suggested that what it takes to be "out of someone's league" according to her read is any woman who looks like the "White, slender, toned, and tan" woman wearing the lingerie, and anyone who does not look like that "may feel that they are not good enough to be out of someone's league." Pointing out that the ad assumes that all men are attracted to this "type" of body, the student wrote, "What about the men who don't find this type of woman attractive?" Exploring the notion that being out of someone's league was "not a good thing," the student also asked, "Who decided it was necessary to be out of someone else's league? What does that even mean? Why is it necessary for me to believe that I am better than someone else?" And while she was questioning who decided it was customary for people to desire being out of more leagues, she also wrote herself into the analysis by acknowledging that for as long as she could remember, she thought the body portrayed in the lingerie was what bodies were "supposed to" look like: "I thought that anyone who was normal looked into the mirror and saw the reflection of a toned, tan, and slender torso . . . from a very young age I thought that if I didn't look that way I would not be out of anyone's league." This student's critical reading excerpts offer insights to the historical and the repetitive nature of women and men being saturated by images of lingerie models portraying what everyone is "supposed" to look like. Her recollection from "a very young age" that she was not representative of the normative bodies in these images also points to the long-term impact bodies in media have on young children.

Another student who analyzed an ad in *Shape Magazine* for "the world's first fat burning drink" described how the ad portrayed a happy body equaling a thin body, "posing the idea that being skinnier promotes happiness." Joining other women who might look at this ad and desire to be skinnier, this student wrote that she too was

at fault of this. I have looked at countless dieting ads and wanted to lose weight. I am a healthy, active

young woman and this ad makes me feel like I should lose weight. I can see myself justifying my weight loss to a friend as "Just 5 pounds."

Writing herself into the analysis as one who has desired the bodily happiness portrayed in the ad via the "before" and "after" pictures of women being privileged who are thinner, therefore happier, this student also highlighted how the "ad is demeaning to women as a whole. Women should feel beautiful for who they are and not for their waist size." Doing this kind of critical analysis and reflection within a critical body pedagogy not only encouraged students to acknowledge how their own bodies were affected by popular culture but it also allowed them to more personally understand the "impact and the mechanisms by which the visual cortex is affected by our image-saturated culture, and how this has led to a diminution of the rich variety of human body expressions, which are disappearing rapidly" (Orbach, 2009, p. 14)—a key issue in diversity and equity education.

Through critique and discussion, students began to express new kinds of power over their thoughts about their bodies. A student responding to the novel *Oscar Wao* (Diaz, 2008) wrote,

There is no harm in aspiring to better oneself, but we need to quit comparing ourselves to others—our normal is not their normal. Even that perfect person whom we placed on a pedestal and dreamt to be just like has insecurities and issues. Realizing this fact is the first step to accepting ourselves and being content with "just being me."

Shockingly simple and stunning in this response is that so many of our undergraduate teacher education students—many of whom would be presumed privileged in many ways—struggle mightily with self-acceptance and personal confidence.

Constructing and narrating a critique of any dominant discourse is largely an intellectual endeavor that may or may not influence how our preservice students move through the world in bodied ways. But moving from critique to plan and action—or at least talking about a plan and action—is one step closer to living with one's body differently. As Orner (2002) contended, these may be foreign knowledges that we are inviting into the classroom, but they are foreign knowledges that most of our students know by heart.

Insights Into Students' Futures as Early Childhood and Elementary Schoolteachers

The assignments referred to in this article did not ask students to consider implications for their future teaching; they were not positioning students as "future teachers," but rather as people and learners in the here and now (other course assignments did link more directly to the elementary classroom

and teaching). However, many students went beyond the expectations of these particular assignments to articulate impressive insights regarding education in general and their future plans specifically. One student, responding to her reading of *Moose* (Klein, 2008), wrote,

Knowing that such young girls are on diets and obsessed with their body size is very concerning and adults need to be more conscious of the negative connotations we give to food and to our own body image . . . Adults are responsible for setting the example for children, so adults need to start being more confident in themselves so that children do not develop a negative attitude towards their own bodies.

What we find particularly interesting in this educational implication is the student's assumption that if "adults . . . start being more confident in themselves [regarding body image]" children would somehow benefit. This implication, drawn independently by one student, aligns with the major theoretical premise of this article: *bodies are pedagogy*. Another student made the same connection—that her body and her bodytalk would affect her students—and extended the notion into a larger framework of critiquing any one normalizing discourse:

In my work as a teacher, I never want my students to know that I am concerned with body image. I know that how I perceive and value myself as a person will be translated in my classroom and I hope to create a learning environment where students are accepting of their classmates and help them realize that everybody's definition of "normal" is different.

This student does not claim transformation through any body pedagogy in her teacher education course that has left her without lingering doubts or concerns about her body image. What she does, however, is articulate a consciousness about the fact that how she values herself will somehow be known to her students and will, in turn, influence the classroom environment. This student's incorporation of the relativity of "normal" and its appropriateness as an inquiry for elementary students also points to her taking up of a critical perspective toward the typically taken-for-granted notion of normal.

Narrating and analyzing embodied experiences and our culture's obsessions around bodies, body size, and bodies-as-objects provided students with an intellectual space for personal and political interrogation, "not as a form of confession, but rather as a testimonial to living in a culture obsessed with food and fat" (Orner, 2002, p. 280). We wonder, following Orner (2002), why these body topics that saturate our daily lives and shape so much about how we see ourselves and others are still silenced as legitimate inquiries in most K-12 and university classrooms. But we are hopeful that our

enactment of this critical body pedagogy has helped our students become conscious of bodies in a way that opens up radical spaces of possibility. We hope these embodied experiences encourage confident young adults and classroom teachers to find value in personal experiences, situate those experiences in a broader sociopolitical context, and engage analytical tools for social critique to work for change. Embodying these practices provides the possibility that they will also embody a similar critical body pedagogy with their early childhood and elementary students. A student like this one, for example, wrote about the ad she used in her critical reading essay and how she would consider using such ads in her classroom:

I would challenge the children to reconstruct this ad using similar concepts but different words and photographs . . . As a future teacher I would like to help my students think critically about what they read and see in the media. There are stereotypes and prejudices that are prevalent in texts and it is our responsibility to be aware of them.

Alongside this student's enthusiasm for engaging elementary-aged students in the deconstruction and reconstruction of media, we found her statement that "it is our responsibility to be aware of [stereotypes and prejudices]" to be poignant. Much of teacher education—or perhaps education in general—points to what "they" or "the students" should be doing. Here this student includes everyone in the responsibility of awareness, implicating us all in the damaging discourses that perpetuate the status quo, and making us each accountable for our own knowing about, or awareness of, such insidious body messages in varied contexts.

When we ask our preservice students to acknowledge their bodies in such contexts, as we too must ask of ourselves as teacher educators, what does it allow us to feel that we did not before? "What are the generative and imaginative possibilities of redefining our relationship to our bodies in contexts such as schools—contexts that have historically been hostile to the lived, messy, irrational, 'grotesque' bodies we all possess?" (Orner, 2002, p. 280). For our preservice students, in addition to many of them drawing on implications related to the importance of their bodied performances as teachers and their personal responsibilities for critically reading oppressive meanings in texts, several reflected on the importance of teachers' positive interventions. For example, one student reflecting on Oscar Wao wrote, "As adult and authority figures, we can never be too careful of avoiding critical comments toward children, as we never know the lasting effects they might have." And another student noted about *Moose*,

I was surprised there wasn't one point in the entire book where [Klein] mentioned a teacher addressing her about [being teased by peers] . . . every teacher has

a significant impact on their students' lives; while we hope it is positive, we have to remember it can be negative.

The student here is specifically referring to a book that focused on body image and eating disorders, but she does not limit her reflection to those topics. Rather, the more narrow focus on bodies that was so personal and even painful to many of our students—again—opened up space for a future educator to think broadly and imaginatively about diverse teacher bodies and student bodies in classrooms together.

Body as Pedagogy: Thoughts on Teacher Education and Future Research

Is it possible to be a 21-year-old woman or man in college in the United States and not have been influenced by dominant notions of femininity and body image? If not, and we presume this to be the case, how can teacher education compensate for those influences and prepare teachers to introduce their future students to healthy relationships with bodies and body image, as well as tools to critique dominant discourses around bodies and other injustices?

Future research in teacher education could engage neoliberal economic theories that actively work to produce subjects who live to consume—a consumption fueled by feelings of inadequacies and neediness that will presumably be filled by material possessions and endless lines of products and services. Teachers and teacher educators are in an ideal position to work against consumption discourses and toward generations of students who can live in the world wielding more power than corporate advertising and normalizing discourses. Bodies are at the center of these issues facing researchers, and issues around body image are just the beginning—albeit an important one.

A critical body pedagogy that introduces a subtle, but explicit, integration of issues of the body throughout a justice-oriented teacher education course opens up spaces for students and instructors alike to explore, critique, and reconstruct normative discourses and practices around the body. Specifically in this article, we drew on student responses from three separate assignments designed in dialogue with theory (*From Where Do I Read the World?*, *Critical Reading*, and *Self-Selected Novels/Memoirs*) that were focused on educating our students as people living in the present who can grow how they see themselves, others, and the world from different perspectives. We want to add that the emphasis in these assignments was not “bodies” or “body image,” but rather broadly defined and open ended; the prevalence of body-related discourses in the students' work, however, points to the necessity of a critical body pedagogy within justice-oriented teacher education.

Perhaps these kinds of assignments and discussions can lead to more people feeling more fully human and worthy

without constantly fighting the media and market-influenced voices in their minds telling them they are not enough of *something* in their bodies (Hughes, 2011). Teachers influence millions of young children everyday, and theorists eloquently argue how bodies themselves are instructional tools that teach others. The bodies represented in the texts in this article certainly support that argument, as students have explicitly and wisely described how images of bodies—and the bodies of others around them—have taught them much, although not enough to be satisfied with.

Although teacher education and professional development workshops and seminars continue to strengthen educators' sensitivity to instructional methods with culturally diverse young children and families, these contexts are suspiciously void of topics of the body. Therefore, in some teacher education programs, future and present teachers are taught to be reflexive in their understandings of race, social class, gender, religion, language, ethnicity, and sometimes sexuality as a way for them to become critically conscious of the power and discourses circulating such positionalities. Without the same focus on bodies, however, well-intended teachers can enter their elementary classrooms with the goal of empowering their diverse students to be critically engaged citizens who can make a difference in the world, and then turn around and joke about diets and perceptions of bodies in ways that perpetuate unhealthy and self-conscious ideas about bodies-as-objects among their students. There is overwhelming evidence that all of the students in our classes have been negatively affected one way or another by the normalizing discourses around bodies and body image. The bodies are there. They always have been.

The issues around bodies have also always been there but have largely been disparaged or dismissed by faculty. Education as the practice of freedom, according to hooks (1994), requires that educators themselves are on the journey toward self-actualization—a journey we continue to travel as we work on our own bodies and minds in preparation of living in the world and being the most present educators we can be. Through a theory of a critical body pedagogy, we can also toss some stones on the path toward self-actualization for students who will forge their own journeys of living differently in the world and teaching more fully—and perhaps even toward social justice—with their future bodied students. The body is the meaning-maker and the producer of meanings—the material form of the body politic. If we hope to encourage transformation in schools, we need to start with our own bodies and tend to the body of the teacher education student sitting in front of us.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: Stephanie

Jones is grateful for funding provided by the Lilly Teaching Fellowship at The University of Georgia for the completion of this project.

References

- Allen, J., & Hermann-Wilmarth, J. (2004). Cultural construction zones. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 55(3), 214-226.
- Bettie, J. (2002). *Women without class: Girls, race, and identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Blackburn, M. V. (2003). Exploring literacy performances and power dynamics at the Loft: Queer youth reading the world and word. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 37(4), 467-490.
- Blackburn, M. V., & Buckley, J. F. (2005). Teaching queer-inclusive English language arts. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 49(3), 202-212.
- Blackburn, M. V., Clark, C. T., Kenney, L. M., & Smith, J. M. (2010). *Acting out! Combating homophobia through teacher activism*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Boler, M. (1999). *Feeling power: Emotions and education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bordo, S. (2003). *Unbearable weight: Feminism, western culture, and the body* (10th Ann. ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Brantlinger, E. (2007). (Re)turning to Marx to understand the unexpected anger among "winners" in schooling: A critical social psychology perspective. In Van Galen, J.A., & Noblit, G.W. (Eds.), *Late to class: Social class and schooling in the new economy*. Albany, NY: SUNY.
- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of sex*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2004a). Defining the outcomes of teacher education: What's social justice got to do with it? *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 32(3), 193-212.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2004b). *Walking the road: Race, diversity, and social justice in teacher education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Cohee, G. E., Daumer, E., Kemp, T. D., Krebs, P. M., Lafky, S. A., & Runzo, S. (1998). *The feminist teacher anthology: Pedagogies and classroom strategies*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Conklin, H. (2008). Modeling compassion in critical, justice-oriented teacher education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 78(4), 652-674.
- Diaz, J. (2008). *The brief wondrous life of Oscar Wao*. New York, NY: Riverhead Trade.
- Dutro, E. (2008). "That's why I was crying on this book": Trauma as testimony in responses to literature. *Changing English*, 15(4), 423-434.
- Ellsworth, E. (1993). Claiming the tenured body. In D. Wear (Ed.), *Center of the web: Women and solitude* (pp. 63-74). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Felman, S., & Laub, D. (1992). *Testimony: Crises of witnessing in literature, psychoanalysis, and history*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Fine, M. (1988). Sexuality, schooling, and adolescent females: The missing discourse of desire. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58(1), 29-51.
- Fine, M., & McLelland, S. (2006). Sexuality education and desire: Still missing after all these years. *Harvard Educational Review*, 76(3), 297-338.
- Foucault, M. (1977/1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1990). *The history of sexuality* (Vol. 1, R. Hurley, Trans.). London, England: Penguin. (Original work published 1976)
- Grumet, M. R. (1988). *Bitter milk: Women and teaching*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Hermann-Wilmarth, J. (2007). Full inclusion: Understanding the role of gay and lesbian texts and films in teacher education. *Language Arts*, 84(4), 347-356.
- Hicks, D. (2002). *Reading lives: Working-class children and literacy learning*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Hicks, D. (2004). Growing up girl in working-poor America: Textures of language, poverty, and place. *Ethos*, 32(2), 214-232.
- Hicks, D. (2005). Class readings: Story and discourse among girls in working-poor America. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 36(3), 212-230.
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- hooks, b. (2000). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- hooks, b. (2003). *Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hughes, H. E. (2010a). Fourteen is the new thirty: Adolescent girls, their bodies, and sexuality. In K. Lee & M. D. Vagle (Eds.), *Developmentalism in early childhood and middle grades education: Critical conversations on readiness and responsiveness* (pp. 149-156). New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Hughes, H. E. (2010b). From anger to awareness: (Re)adjusting pedagogical possibilities in teacher education. In J. G. Maudlin, B. Stodghill, & M. F. He (Eds.), *Engaging the possibilities and complexities of hope: Utterances of curriculum and pedagogy's past, present, and future* (pp. 51-65). Troy, NY: Educator's International Press.
- Hughes, H. E. (2011). *Phenomenal bodies, phenomenal girls: How young adolescent girls experience being enough in their bodies* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Georgia, GA.
- Johnson, T. S. (2005). The "problem" of bodies and desires in teaching. *Teaching Education*, 16(2), 131-149.
- Jones, S. (2003). Identities of race, class, and gender inside and outside the math classroom: A girls' math club as a hybrid possibility. *Feminist Teacher*, 14(3), 220-233.
- Jones, S. (2006a). *Girls, social class, and literacy: What teachers can do to make a difference*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Jones, S. (2006b). Language with an attitude: White girls performing class. *Language Arts*, 84(2), 114-124.
- Jones, S. (2006c). Lessons from Dorothy Allison: Social class, critical literacy, and teacher education. *Changing English*, 13, 293-305.

- Jones, S. (2009). Against all odds: A case study of one White, middle-class, female teacher becoming an engaged intellectual. *Changing English*, 16(2), 231-246.
- Jones, S. (2010). Bodies before me. In L. Scherff & K. Spector (Eds.), *Culturally relevant pedagogy: Clashes and confrontations* (pp. 165-179). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Jones, S. (2011). *Overcoming nomos*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Jones, S. (in press). Trauma narratives and nomos in teacher education. *Teaching Education*.
- Klein, S. (2008). *Moose: A memoir of fat camp*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Kumashiro, K. (2004). Uncertain beginnings: Learning to teach paradoxically. *Theory Into Practice*, 43(2), 111-115.
- Kumashiro, K. (2009). Teaching teachers to teach queerly. In W. Ayers, T. Quinn, & D. Stovall (Eds.), *Handbook of social justice in education* (pp. 718-721). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Leith, W. (2009, February 1). Lessons on the body politic [Review of the book *Bodies*]. *The Observer*. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/feb/01/bodies-review-susie-orbach>
- Lenzmire, T., & Snaza, N. (2010). What teacher education can learn from blackface minstrelsy. *Educational Researcher*, 39(5), 413-422.
- Love, B. L. (2010). *Bridging my own cultural mismatches: An epistemologically-driven research agenda*. Presentation at The University of Georgia, Athens, GA.
- Lowenstein, K. (2009). The work of multicultural teacher education: Reconceptualizing White teacher candidates as learners. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(1), 163-196.
- Maher, F. (1999). Progressive education and feminist pedagogies: Issues in gender, power, and authority. *Teachers College Record*, 101(1), 35-59.
- McDonald, M., & Zeichner, K. (2008). Social justice teacher education. In W. Ayers, T. Quinn, & D. Stovall (Eds.), *Handbook of social justice in education* (pp. 595-610). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Miller, S. J., & Kirkland, D. (Eds.). (2010). *Change matters: Critical essays on moving social justice research from theory to practice*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Nespor, J. (1997). *Tangled up in school: Politics, space, bodies, and signs in the educational process*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Newman, J. I., Albright, C., & King-White, R. (2011). Staying fat: Moving past the exercise-industrial-complex. In L. Scherff & K. Spector (Eds.), *Culture, relevance, and schooling: Exploring uncommon ground* (pp. 103-124). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Orbach, S. (2009). *Bodies*. New York, NY: Picador.
- Orner, M. (2002). Working up our appetites: Pedagogical encounters and the relentless pursuit of thinness. In S. Shapiro & S. Shapiro (Eds.), *Body movements: Pedagogy, politics, and social change* (pp. 264-281). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Reay, D. (1998). *Class work: Mothers' involvement in their children's primary schooling*. London, England: UCL Press.
- Shapiro, S. B. (1999). *Pedagogy and the politics of the body: A critical praxis*. New York, NY: Garland.
- Sleeter, C. (2008). Preparing White teachers for diverse students. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, & J. McIntyre (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring issues in changing contexts* (3rd ed., pp. 559-582). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Sumara, D., Davis, B., & Iftody, T. (2006). Normalizing literary responses in the teacher education classroom. *Changing English*, 13(1), 55-67.
- Thompson, B. (1994). Food, bodies, and growing up female: Childhood lessons about culture, race, and class. In P. Fallon, M. A. Katzman, & S. C. Wooley (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on eating disorders* (pp. 355-378). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Vavrus, M. (2009). Sexuality, schooling, and teacher identity formation: A critical pedagogy for teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25, 383-390.
- Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2002). Preparing culturally responsive teachers: Rethinking the curriculum. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(1), 20-32.
- Walkerdine, V. (1997). *Daddy's girl: Young girls and popular culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Walkerdine, V., Lucey, H., & Melody, J. (2001). *Growing up girl: Psychosocial explorations of gender and class*. New York: New York University Press.
- Weiler, K. (1987). *Women teaching for change: Gender, class, and power*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.
- Weiler, K. (1994). Freire and a feminist pedagogy of difference. In P. McLaren & C. Lankshear (Eds.), *Politics of liberation* (pp. 12-40). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Youdell, D. (2006). *Impossible bodies, impossible selves: Exclusions and student subjectivities*. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer.
- Zeichner, K., & Conklin, H. (2008). Teacher education programs as sites for teacher preparation. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, & J. McIntyre (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring issues in changing contexts* (3rd ed., pp. 269-289). New York, NY: Routledge.

About the Authors

Stephanie Jones is an associate professor of education at The University of Georgia. Her work focuses on the complex intersections of social class, gender, critical literacies, and feminist pedagogies to better understand the lived experiences of young children, families, and teacher education students. She is author and coauthor of two books, including *Girls, Social Class, and Literacy: What Teachers Can Do to Make a Difference*, and numerous articles published in journals such as *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, *Language Arts*, *The Reading Teacher*, *Pedagogies*, and *Rethinking Schools*. One of her current projects is using the long-form comics medium to represent a 3-year study of feminist pedagogies in teacher education.

Hilary Hughes-Decatur is an assistant professor of curriculum and instruction at Virginia Commonwealth University. Her research interests focus on young adolescent girls and how they experience the cultural parameters put on their bodies, theories and pedagogies surrounding the body, and equity-oriented teacher education.