

S9

SENSUAL PEDAGOGIES

Bessie P. Dernikos
bdernikos@fau.edu

Asilia Franklin-Phipps
asilia.f@gmail.com

Nancy Lesko
nl70@tc.columbia.edu

This stream explores pedagogies as an affective entanglement of “sensual” relations, rather than a stable set of curricular moves. Within pedagogical spaces, such relations un/expectedly emerge to highlight affect as an embodied sense-making experience: a feeling that reverberates, resonates, wavers (Duggan & García Zarranz, 2022), produces—potentially “undoing” us at every turn (Berlant, 2011). According to Berlant, our potential undoing by (negative) forces is a “sensual, historical experience” in that it invites us to become curious about those pedagogies that sense and refuse the rhetoric, ideologies, and norms of the dominant public sphere (Anderson et al., 2022).

These threats from the dominant public sphere have become heightened in the aftermath of the global pandemic. Everyday media headlines continue to be peppered with racist, homophobic, anti-trans, and anti-abortion agendas. Education bills have been effectively introduced and signed into law that strictly limit what can be taught and discussed in pre-K–12 schools regarding race, sexuality, and gender. These incidents are not isolated to the US and have manifested in similar iterations across Canada and the UK. In fact, the past few years have seen a steady, precipitous rise of “anti-woke” discourses, text censorship rhetoric, and “science of reading war” debates (Dernikos et al., 2023).

Educational scholars have noted concerns that the cultural, political, and racial evasiveness of narrow views of pedagogy both ignore the sociocultural factors involved in learning and reinforce homogenizing, one size fits all approaches to

instruction that do not account for children's creativity and "breathtaking diversity" (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). As Patel (2023) reminds us, "binaries kill nuance" and cannot account for the affects that such threats re/produce. An attention to affect and pedagogy as sensual relations is thus necessary to examine the "politics of feeling" within educational spaces: how feelings not only become markers of subjectivity/humanity, but also technologies of domination (Yao, 2021). For instance, in recent years, educational critiques (see e.g. Dernikos et al., 2023) of #AffectSoWhite have highlighted how the assumption of "universal" affect in classroom spaces is racialized—affectively aligned with white, cis-hetero feelings and representative of the "ideal humanist subject" or "Man" (Snaza, 2019; Wynter, 2003).

Sensual pedagogies resist master accounts of knowing/being/doing/feeling while embracing "messiness," that is, a commitment to become curious, worried, and suspicious of academic practices, methodologies, and theories that refuse relational thinking/feeling as well as all forms of life (McKittrick, 2021). Sensual pedagogies, however, do not deny joy. They approach normativity as "a scene of negotiated sustenance"—where educators become, think, and feel anchorless amid a shifting sociopolitical landscape that is all at once ambiguous, turbulent, hopeful (Berlant, 2011; cf. Anderson et al., 2021).

This stream invites papers that explore affect's possibilities and promises, but also its limitations and threats, so that pedagogies may be felt, imagined, and *sensed* otherwise. Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- Race, gender, sexuality, class, and education
- Anxiety, paranoia, pessimism, resistance, and/or refusal
- Art, music, film, literature
- Ordinary and extraordinary violence in educational spaces
- Fatigue, fear, and fatalism
- AI: technological foreclosures and advancements
- Pedagogy under threat
- Childhood and youth as aesthetic and affective states
- Sonic technologies
- Trauma and affective hauntings