As a team, Debra Pane and Dr. Tonette Rocco represent a merging of transformative literacy, re-conceptualized classroom discipline, critical race theory and teaching for social justice (Florida International University, n.d.a; n.d.b). Pane is currently an adjunct professor of Education at Miami-Dade College whose research interests include school-to-prison pipeline, transformative literacy, critical discourse analysis, and the reconceptualization of classroom discipline (Florida International University, n.d.a). Rocco is currently an associate professor of adult education and human resource development at Florida International University whose research interest include continuing professional education, critical race theory, and teaching for social justice (Florida International University, n.d.b). Together, they are positioned to address how transformative teacher development and practices can address dominant ideologies that promote the school-to-prison pipeline.

In *Transforming the School-to-Prison Pipeline*, Pane and Rocco combine critical theory, interactive power analysis, and transformative practices to interrogate dominant ideology and
exclusionary discipline practices. With a focus on critical theory, Pane and Rocco apply critical race theory, critical micro-ethnography, and critical discourse analysis to discern how cultural assumptions, social interactions, and language impacts praxis with regards to exclusionary school discipline. The application of interactive power analysis examines how power relations are present in “all actions and makes a difference in subsequent events” (p. 40). The authors analyze four types of power observed that impact cultural power in the classroom. Where normative power occurs as one holds a “higher position in culture or society”, the use of interactively established contracts seeks to negotiate a mutual understanding between teachers and students (p. 318). Pane and Rocco highlight coercive power, through Mr. Glass’ use the threat of punishment to change behavior, and charm, through Mr. Jenkins’ use of personality and humor to mediate conflict. The authors make careful note that when the use of power distorts claims of mutual interests and involve “false unreal choices, cultural power is at play” (p. 41). Through critical discourse analysis of social interactions, the text details how patterns of resistance, accommodation, conformism, and negotiation “influence…use or non-use of exclusionary discipline” (p. 42). The text skillfully exposes the pervasiveness of dominant ideology in pedagogical practices, decision-making, and disciplinary policy and identifies spaces where transformative practices and re-conceptualized thinking can improve instructional outcomes. Pane and Rocco provide a text that purposefully acknowledges “the undisclosed phenomenon of exclusionary school discipline…to find ways of transforming this oppressive yet understudied educational practice” (p. 39).

With a style and approach rooted in critical theory and transformative practices, Transforming the School-to-Prison Pipeline acknowledges seminal works on cultural synchronization and cultural relevant pedagogy while complimenting contemporary works on transformative practices and school push out policy. As Jacqueline Jordan Irvine’s Black Students and School Failure (1990) details how the absence of cultural synchronization
impacts teacher expectations and student failure, Pane and Rocco extend Irvine’s assertion to include subtle and obvious examples of failed expectations. Dominant ideology, according to Irvine (1990), employs a primary objective of control which permitted “periods of the day when students did nothing...as long as they were quiet and subdued” (p. 7). The authors extend Irvine’s assessment by indicating how teacher use charm, protection, psychology, and fear as tools of control and suppression of resistance, often at the expense of instruction. Like Anthony L. Brown’s *Brothers Gonna Work it Out* (2009), the text features a critical analysis of teacher styles that impact the learning environment. Where Brown (2009) exhibits character and discourse analysis from Baba Gaines, Baba King, Baba Bryant to demonstrate the effectiveness of *enforcer, negotiator, and playful* pedagogical styles that find success in schools, respectively, Pane and Rocco showcase Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Franklin, Ms. Gomez, and Mr. Glass to demonstrate how *charmer, protector, counselor, and coercive lecturer* pedagogical styles respectively find their way to exclusionary practices. *Transforming the School-to-Prison Pipeline* is also complimented by Eve Tuck’s *Urban Youth and School Pushout* (2012) in their assessment of practices concerning students who have been excluded from traditional school settings. Where Tuck (2012) explores the *humiliating ironies* of schooling procedures that support education and human development yet continually push students out, Pane and Rocco highlight the humiliating irony of those charged to educate yet place premium on power relations to control rather than educate. The text also connects very heavily to contemporary reports on discipline. The Council of State Governments Justice Center’s *The School Discipline Consensus Report* (2014) notes that students are less likely to misbehave when they are engaged and “take an active role in the learning process, find the content interesting and relevant, and have some influence over how and what they learn” (p. 57). This assertion is supported by the text’s recommendation of teacher education programs that re-conceptualizes foundational
coursework that “creates classroom climates that empower students to participate actively” (p. 293).

Transforming the School-to-Prison Pipeline begins with a brief analysis of the extensive research that proves racial disproportionality in school discipline procedures that establishes the school-to-prison pipeline. The authors cite leading scholars such as Russell Skiba, Pedro Noguera, Daniel Losen, and national data sources such as the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to establish the credibility and framework for the text. Debra Pane, as the leading author, provides a personal journal that aligns her experience and evolution in alternative education to the transformative scholars in critical pedagogy and social justice such as bell hooks, Gloria Ladsen-Billings and Paulo Freire. Pane skillfully uses her experience, and thereby critical theory and transformative practices, to foreshadow the later recommendations of re-conceptualized thinking in teacher development, school administration and ideology. The text is structurally designed to provide the reader with frequent take-aways, critically reflective questions and examples of alternative strategies that transformative teachers use to create student-centered learning experiences that mitigate exclusionary discipline. Through critical micro-ethnographic study, the text asserts use of power, social interaction, and instructional strategies to prevent suspension as guiding criteria with which to examine dominant ideology versus the transformative mindset. Using an alternative school in Florida as the study site, Pane and Rocco examine four classrooms, the instructors, and their discourse with students to assess various pedagogical styles. A strikingly consistent theme across the study of the four teachers is the focus on control and suppression and the relegation of instruction to “pouring of predetermined knowledge into students’ heads”, or banking education (p. 20). Whether the charmer, protector, counselor, or lecturer, the authors reveal that students are often passive, solo participants in the instructional process. Pane and Rocco notes that banking education, as exhibited in the text by Mr. Jenkins giving answers, and the denial of time for reflective
thinking, as evidenced in Mr. Glass’ overuse of lecture and busywork, as tools for control that “result in miseducation, stunted intellectual growth, insensitivity, and lack of responsiveness” (p. 20). The authors’ present findings, consistent with *The School Discipline Consensus Report* (2014), assert that teachers are in need of the training and support to create nurturing student-centered instructional environments rather than a focus on control and suppression. Pane and Rocco close their analysis with recommendations that are skillfully foreshadowed throughout the text. Unlike *The School Discipline Consensus Report* (2014), which recommends change primarily at the site level, *Transforming the School-to-Prison Pipeline* thoughtfully extends transformative practices and reconceptualization to teacher service programs.

A very noticeable strength of the text is found in its structure. Pane and Rocco strategically use discourse analysis to deconstruct language and interpretations, critical reflective questioning to encourage analysis of praxis, and transformative mindset strategies that correspond to unique dialectical spaces in the discourse. The use of alternative strategies that highlight how transformative teachers create inclusive, student-centered classrooms is crucial to the authors’ strengths in the text. Noticeably absent from this study are pilot programs/schools that work or transformative teachers, outside of the leading author, to contrast actual practice. Though strategic to utilize an alternative school as a site, the text may leave readers to discern whether the takeaways and critical reflections are intended primarily for alternative or general education settings. Although a minor limitation, it is important to note that the school-to-prison pipeline begins in the general education setting.

*Transforming the School-to-Prison Pipeline* is highly recommended for program directors of teacher education programs, school district leaders, site-based school leaders, teacher leaders and urban education researchers. Pane and Rocco’s recommendations for reconceptualization of teacher education programs represent a direct call for program coordinators to re-envision the preparation
of teachers. Concurrently, the call for the revitalization of teacher education programs presents an opportunity for strategic partnerships with school district leaders to support the college-to-classroom pipeline for a new generation of change agents. The text is also recommended for site-based school and teacher leaders to implement meaningful collaboration, diversity, and climate discussions that include input from administrators, facilitators, teachers, and communities. Finally, for application of critical theory and research documentation, the text is recommended for urban education researchers. Critical theory as an umbrella for transformative practices, deconstruction of dominant ideologies, and re-conceptualization of practices serve as a model to ensure that research is firmly planted in a theoretical framework. Pane and Rocco take significant care to ensure that their work rests upon the research and data of leading scholars and national data sources.

References


About the Reviewer

**Derrick Robinson**
Graduate Assistant
UNC Charlotte
College of Education
drobin60@uncc.edu

Derrick Robinson is a doctoral student in the Curriculum and Instruction for Urban Education. Derrick has earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science from Morehouse College. He continued on to earn a Master’s of Business Administration with a focus on Finance from Johns Hopkins University and a Master’s of Education Administration from Wingate University. Derrick has taught Social Studies and Business Education for 15 years in public schools in Prince George’s County (MD), Washington DC, Howard County (MD) and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (NC). Derrick Robinson led the establishment of the Academy of Finance at the Friendship Collegiate Academy in Washington DC. He has taught at-risk youth in the Maryland’s Tomorrow Program and gifted and talented students in urban schools in the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Program. Derrick has been in school leadership at the middle and high school level since 2009. His research interests include: shaping education decision-making through economic theory and policy, resolving school discipline through decision-making curriculum, and reshaping Pre-K-12 curriculum for 21st Century Skills.
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