



SPECIAL SERIES CALL FOR PAPERS

Truth-telling in history education: Truth and justice in a 'post-truth' era

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Truth-telling in history education has recently gained urgency amidst global reckonings with colonialism, genocide, systemic racism, and historical injustices (Miles & Keynes, 2025). In recent years there has been increasing recognition of the need for history education to confront difficult historical truths rather than perpetuating popular or nationalist narratives (Keynes, 2024). From Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commissions in Canada, Australia and the Nordic countries to debates over curriculum reforms in various parts of the world, nations are grappling with how to teach contested pasts in ways that are honest, inclusive, and transformative. These challenges have been further complicated in a post-truth era characterised by the proliferation of misinformation, disinformation, and contested narratives across digital platforms (Jones, 2021; Feirersterin, 2021).

The rise of the term fake news – narratives that distort or fabricate evidence to serve contemporary political agendas (De Keersmaecker et al., 2020) – and reported cases of students' limited ability to evaluate the credibility of historical claims on digital media (McGrew et al., 2018; Nygren & Guath, 2019) reinforce the call for history classrooms to serve as critical sites for cultivating the media literacy and epistemic cognition needed to navigate an increasingly complex information landscape (Journell, 2019).

While historical truth itself remains deeply contested (Boadu, 2020), truth-telling in history education is understood here tentatively as not merely about factual accuracy but rather an ethical and pedagogical commitment to justice, recognition, and inclusion of and for minoritised groups, cultures and histories. It involves challenging dominant narratives, decolonising history education, amplifying marginalised voices, and fostering accountability, empathy and critical historical consciousness (Cairns et al., 2024; Mussi, 2020).

This special issue seeks to explore theoretical, empirical and pedagogical approaches related to truth-telling in history education. It aims to explore how truth-telling is conceptualised, practiced, and contested in history education across diverse national and cultural contexts. It further explores the role of truth in history curricula and examines how educators address contested narratives, foster critical thinking, and navigate the challenges of representing historical truths.

The editors welcome empirical research articles, theoretical papers, systematic literature reviews, and critical reflections on practice within history education across different contexts. We encourage submissions that center perspectives that take an intersectional approach to truth-telling in history education.

Authors are asked to engage with the following key themes and questions:

- **Theoretical frameworks:** What does truth-telling mean for history education? How might truth-telling be interpreted in history education? How do truth and reconciliation sit in relation to existing theoretical approaches and debates such as 'truth' in history, postmodern critiques of truth, historical consciousness, historical thinking, materialist and post-qualitative approaches? How do epistemological and ethical considerations inform approaches to truth-telling in history education?
- **Pedagogical approaches:** How can educators balance multiple perspectives and historical truths in the classroom? What methodologies are effective for teaching contested or difficult histories? How do teachers navigate emotional, political, and ethical tensions in the classroom? What educational outcomes are associated with approaches that confront difficult historical truths? What effects do knowledge of history and explicit instruction discourses have on truth telling?
- **Curriculum and policy:** How do curricula support or suppress truth-telling? How does curricula reflect particular truths and exclude others? How are diverse histories, peoples, groups, and cultures represented in history curricula and textbooks?
- **Teacher and student perspectives:** How do teachers and students reason about truth telling? How do teachers navigate their own positionality and identity when teaching difficult historical truths? How do students respond to curriculum that addresses historical injustices related to their communities? In what ways do students' prior beliefs and family histories/narratives interact with truth-telling in the history classroom?
- **Public history and post-truth digital media:** How do museums, memorials, and online platforms contribute to or complicate truth-telling? How does the post-truth (social) media landscape and artificial intelligence shape truth-telling discourses in history education? How might teachers leverage digital tools to support critical engagement with historical narratives?
- **Indigenising history education:** How can the engagement and reframing of history education from First Nations perspectives support empathy, reciprocity, justice, accountability, and the development of the whole student? How can this enable community health, healing and sovereignty? How could this contribute to the community building capacity of all students of history?
- **Decolonising history education:** How are Indigenous and other marginalised perspectives integrated or resisted in school history? How does truth-telling lead to justice and accountability? How does truth-telling sit with decolonising frameworks for history education?
- **Truth and justice commissions and education:** What educational lessons can be drawn from the legacies of truth and justice commissions?
- **Truth and identity:** How does truth telling in history education intersect with issues of identity and representation? How can history education promote understanding and reconciliation in post-conflict settings?

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Expressions of interest in the form of an abstract of 300-500 words, up to six references, and a 50-word biographical statement for each author should be sent by email to the handling editors: Gideon Boadu (gideon.boadu@rmit.edu.au), Matthew Keynes (m.keynes@unimelb.edu.au) and Aleryk Fricker (al.fricker@deakin.edu.au)

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