

Editor's
Introduction:
Advancing
Educational Opportunities
in a Multicultural Society

This issue of Teacher Education Quarterly is dedicated to advancing the quality of educational opportunities provided for all children, especially those who have been marginalized based upon the color of their skin or the cultural and religious tenets they observe. Culturally diverse populations of students have been and are continuing to be caught in what John Sanchez and Mary E. Stuckey (in this issue) refer to as the "interplay of power and cultural dominance." As student populations in the United States are becoming increasingly reflective of minority cultures, the teaching force remains predominantly caucasian. In California, for example, ten years from now 75 percent of all students will be coming to school speaking a language other than English. By the year 2035 over 50 percent of our nation's K-12 students will be comprised of racial/ethnic minority students (Montecinos & Rios, in this issue). Who will speak for these students? It is in the best interest of our nation, our society, and our neighborhood communities, that all students are held to high academic expectations and are provided the learning environments essential in which to actualize success and ultimately to contribute in productive, significant ways. Equal access to a quality education is a goal we must meet. Yet to meet this goal we must commit ourselves to acting upon what we know and are learning about the needs and requirements necessary to help students of ethnic and culturally diverse populations excel in all of our nations's classrooms.

Editor's Introduction

The articles in this issue emphasize the increasingly critical need to prepare teachers with not only the knowledge and skills necessary to work effectively in culturally diverse classrooms, but also with the capacity to facilitate the acquisition, appreciation, and acceptance of the multitude of perspectives inherent in the human experience. Clearly, one of the great challenges facing the teacher education profession today revolves around the types of preparation necessary for teachers to work in meaningful ways with ethnically and culturally diverse student populations. Teacher educators are responsible for teaching and enabling prospective teachers to not only understand, but to cherish this panorama of human perception by helping them to enter the profession with the ability and disposition to transcend stereotypes associated with education and schooling, teaching and learning, as well as curriculum policies and practices. The decision-making powers in schooling and education have historically been harbored in the dominant cultural discourse which has not willingly recognized alternative language to describe, analyze, and interpret human expression. Developing a socially-held belief system valuing racial and cultural difference is key to advancing educational equity and opportunity. The authors whose work appears in the following pages are not only speaking from the results of their professional inquiry, but from their hearts as well. I invite you to interact with the work presented in this issue and to challenge yourselves and your colleagues to find ways in which to help bring about an educational liberation ensuring academic success for all children.

The six articles selected for publication by our Panel of Readers for this issue address the role of teacher education around issues related to cultural diversity and second-language learners. Carmen Montecinos and Francisco A. Rios open this issue with "Assessing Preservice Teachers' Zones of Concern and Comfort with Multicultural Education." Vivian Fueyo and Stephanie Bechtol follow with "Those Who Can, Teach: Reflecting on Teaching Diverse Populations." Describing the demographic changes taking place in our nation's schools and offering a teaching standards framework to help affect the quality of beginning teachers' work with second-language learners is the focus for Ronald W. Solórzano and Daniel G. Solórzano's article entitled "Beginning Teacher Standards: Impact on Second-Language Learners and Implications for Teacher Preparation." Ruth Johnson, Preston Becker, and Floyd Olive offer us "Teaching the Second-Language Testing Course Through Test Development by Teachers-in-Training." In a powerfully thought-provoking essay, John Sanchez and Mary E. Stuckey engage in an examination of Native American perspectives about public education in the United States in their piece entitled "From Boarding Schools to the Multicultural Classroom: The Intercultural Politics of Education, Assimilation, and American Indians." To conclude this issue, Nawang Phuntsog provides us with a theoretical and practical approach to teaching students of ethnic and cultural diversity in "The Magic of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: In Search of the Genie's Lamp in Multicultural Education."

It is my pleasure as editor to offer our readers the work presented by these fine teacher educators. Their scholarship and personal perceptions create for us important lenses through which to examine our own work as teachers and teacher educators working to affect change in a multicultural society. I believe you will find these articles both challenging and useful. Your comments and reactions, as well as your suggestions and contributions for future issues, are welcome. We at Teacher Education Quarterly look forward to hearing from you.

—Thomas Nelson
Editor