Editor's Introduction:
Teachers and Teacher Education Research

As editor I often receive online press releases and news briefs from sources near and far. Recently John Perricone, a veteran high school teacher from New York state, emailed me a press release announcing the publication of a his book, *Zen and the Art of Public School Teaching*, along with his upcoming schedule for speaking engagements. My curiosity was piqued by both the books title as well as the extensive nature of his keynote speaking itinerary. I emailed John, explained my dual roles as editor of *Teacher Education Quarterly* and professor of education, and asked if he would be willing to have the publisher send me a copy of his book for my review. John agreed, and three days later I found myself engaged in his elegantly thoughtful perspectives about what it means to be a teacher. Mr. Perricone establishes in his book two primary and interrelated assumptions. One is that "we teach who we are," and two, that "one's philosophical identity ultimately dictates one's teaching style." Simple enough I thought. But on further reflection, I began to associate those assumptions with what typically occurs with school of education practices in preparing teachers to work in public schools. The pressure to conform to national and state legislation is enormous. In today's politically-driven standards climate associated with mandated curricula, teaching techniques, and testing, typically decisions about the nature of teaching and learning are driven by non-educators far from the realities of classroom life. And, too often it seems, that humanness is a variable that is mostly perceived as something of lesser value than are the techniques of writing lesson plans, designing classroom management strategies, organizing text-driven curricula, and adhering to rigid testing regimens. Educational policies typically fail to recognize the powerful nature of teachers' beliefs and philosophical orientations about the ways in which teaching and learning are conceived. Learning to teach has become relegated to a programmatically intentional willingness to disregard the human and personal aspects of who

we are and our philosophical orientations to life and work, at the expense of seeking a standardized system based upon technical efficiency and strict and narrowly-defined accountability measures. The ways in which humanness can be manifested in learning environments have apparently become secondary to specifically-designed and prescribed outcomes. Academic scholars Madeleine Grumet and Nell Noddings, among others, have a long history of promoting human relationship development and pedagogy of caring as central components to teaching and learning. Perhaps this work ought to be more centrally considered in teacher education curricula.

As the teacher education profession wrestles with the contradictions between technical skill acquisition for the purpose of preparing teachers to raise student achievement levels on standardized tests and promoting the development of mean-ingful and human relationships, it would be wise to seek out and recognize more often those passionate teachers who are clearly making life-long differences in young people's lives. Just the other day I received a most moving email query. The note was from a long forgotten name. After apparently having seen my name on a website, she wrote inquiring whether I might be the same Mr. Nelson she had as a middle school science teacher back in 1979-1980. In her note she stated that if indeed I was one and the same, "I just wanted to say thank you for the respect and thoughtfulness you gave to us as students. In turn you taught us to give the same back to our world and the people and things in it." We never know the long-term impact we have on our students. What we do remember is the incredible significance of the depth of the human relationships we forge and nurture with and among both our students and colleagues. And, the most exciting part of the email note was that she became a teacher!

I encourage our readers to acknowledge the accomplishments of teachers who bring to the classroom, along with technical skills and theoretical knowledge, the ability and dedication to creating meaningful learning environments that reflect the caring, compassion, and human depth so needed in a world filled with turmoil, hatred, and violence. Teacher-student engagement around issues of ethical and moral values in society and what it means to be human ought to be considered as critically important (see Howard in this issue), and perhaps more important than the discrete bits of subject matter knowledge too often only articulated on standardized multiple-choice exams.

This Fall issue opens with a call to arms, "Assessing the Special Education Faculty Shortage: The Crisis in California—A Statewide Study of the Professoriate" by Susan Evans, Michael Eliot, Jolene Hood, Max Driggs, Ayako Mori, and Theresa Johnson. The authors present their research findings on the problems associated with the declining number of special education faculty in higher education, and propose suggestions for helping ameliorate such critical conditions.

Jean Moule follows with her compelling piece, "Implementing a Social Justice Perspective in Teacher Education: Invisible Burden for Faculty of Color," a self-study of what it means to be an African American woman teaching for social justice.

In "Preparing Moral Educators in an Era of Standards-Based Reform," Robert W. Howard challenges the current standards-based reforms as having deleterious effects on the education of moral citizens in a democracy, while calling for greater focus on ethical discourse in K-12 classrooms.

James Cantor and Sue Schaar present their study, "A Dynamic Relationship: The Impact of a Formal and Informal Assessment on a Professional Development School for In-Service Non-Credentialed Teachers," which examines an alternative teacher preparation program designed to address the problem of high turnover among inner-city teachers.

Jennifer L. Snow-Gerono follows with "Naming Inquiry: PDS Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher Research and Living an Inquiry Stance Toward Teaching." In this most important article, the author presents the findings from her study focusing on the powerful nature of learning to teach through research collaboration.

In "Preservice Teachers' Observations of Cooperating Teachers and Peers While Participating in an Early Field Experience," Nancy A. Anderson, Mary Alice Barksdale, and Clare E. Hite continue the theme of learning to teach through becoming researchers in classrooms.

"Assessing the Impact of Service-Learning on Preservice Teachers in an After-School Program" by Brenda H. Spencer, Ann M. Cox-Petersen, and Theresa Crawford describes their research findings on the role of service-learning in teacher preparation. Again, this article forwards notions of expanding the ways in which teachers come to understand the complexities of their professional workplace.

Concluding this issue, Steve Turley presents "Professional Lives of Teacher Educators in an Era of Mandated Reform." It is fitting that this article completes this 2005 year (Volume 32) of *Teacher Education Quarterly*. Professor Turley explores the significance of current mandated reforms and the dilemmas posed on the ways in which teacher educators perceive themselves, their colleagues, and the teacher education profession itself.

I want to extend my appreciation to the authors for their manuscript submissions and commend them for their outstanding contributions, not only to this issue of the journal, but to the entire education profession. And most importantly, I am deeply moved by how teachers and students in schools have been so thoughtfully honored by this body of work. And, a special thank you to John Perricone!

All of us at *Teacher Education Quarterly* welcome your feedback and encourage you to continue to promote genuine humanness and caring as well as moral and civic responsibility for all.

—Thomas Nelson
Editor

Reference

Perricone, J. (2005). *Zen and the art of public school teaching*. Baltimore: Publish America.